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A SECOND ADDRESS
TO THE
STUDENTS OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE,
RELATING TO
JESUS CHRIST,
AND THE ORIGIN OF THE
GREAT ERRORS CONCERNING HIM;
WITH A LIST OF THE
FALSE READINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND
THE MISTRANSLATIONS OF THE ENGLISH
BIBLE WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO SUPPORT
THOSE ERRORS.

BY THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M. A. *K*
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"Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether
he be one, pure and simple being; or whether Thou art a
threefold deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit."

Dr. Watts's solemn Address to the Deity.

L O N D O N;

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TO THE

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INTRODUCTION.

The necessity of a serious application of the mental powers to God, and our duty. Prejudices against Dr. Priestley removed. The intent of the following work. Mr. Hawkins, the Bampton-lecturer's very reprehensible way of speaking of the scriptures, of the apostle Paul, and of Jesus Christ. Justin Martyr, the first bringer-in of more gods than one, among christians. Good and sensible men how deceived. A just representation of the sacred writings of importance.

I.

THE proper business of a rational creature is to make inquiry after the benevolent Power that made him, and to find out in what manner he may best recommend himself to his favour.

a

But

But whilst some whole nations are for the present left unprovided with the means of this salutary knowlege, and multitudes in all countries need to be excited to make use of the light imparted to them; peculiarly favourable is your situation, ye studious youth, in those your loved retreats, on slow-winding *Cam's* fair banks, or by *Isis's* silver stream, where Wisdom opens to you all her stores; presenting you with the learned labours and example of sages of antient and modern times, who have sought the great creator in his volume of nature, where every insect, herb and pebble, bespeaks his power and goodness, and skill divine; and also affording helps, and leisure, to interpret for yourselves the written pages of his revealed will.

To this pursuit, of all others the most delightful and enchanting to a virtuous mind, every thing prompts and invites you: your time, the place, set apart, and devoted to it; nay the very walks and groves cry out and reproach you, as you pass along, as unworthy to live and expatiate in them, if you waste away your precious hours in indolence, or vice: *Withdraw; these hallowed seats, and pleasing, venerable*

venerable walks, belong not to you: give place to others! (a)

These your superior advantages, you are bound to cultivate with all your power, not for yourselves only, but for the good of others; for nothing is given for the use of the individual only: that you may be the instruments of conveying knowledge, and the most lasting happiness to your dark or torpid fellow-mortals. For this is the method of the Divine Being, in carrying on his designs of virtue and the most perfect felicity for his creatures, to make them subservient and useful to each other.

a 2

And

(a) Let me not here pass you over in silence, without most ardent vows for your prosperity, ye rising youth of *New College, Hackney's* studious seats, not without the still sequestered walk, though almost within the hearing of the busy hum of the thronged metropolis: where you are initiated into the higher forms of learning, by her different professors, without slavish subjection to the dictates of fallible men, in your sentiments, and worship of the great Creator. May you ever be trained up to act your parts with propriety, dignity, and usefulness to your country, in your several ranks and stations; and may some continually from among you go forth, and become the happy instruments, in a long succession of ages, of carrying knowledge and arts, virtue and true religion over the globe!

And you should the more earnestly labour after the highest attainments in science, and the most ardent benevolence for others, because you know not to what great and eminent degree of usefulness you may be called, in these *great times*, in which you live; in this opening of a new and golden age for truth and liberty, and freedom from every oppression, and fetter upon the human mind.

II.

MAY I hope, that it was not in vain attempted in a former address, to silence the alarm given you by a (*b*) worthy person under narrow, unhappy prejudices, of danger to be apprehended from a perusal of the works of (*c*) one man, from whom as philosopher, metaphysician, moralist, and divine, there is so much to be learned, not elsewhere to be found; whose life is spent in investigating and communicating important truth to the world; and in guarding and defending it afterwards

(*b*) Dr. Horne, head of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Dean of Canterbury.

(*c*) Dr. Priestley.

terwards, (especially in what relates to the honour and sole worship of the one only true God and creator of all things, as taught by the holy Jesus), against those who are for keeping up the kingdom of darkness for ever; and who is actuated by the purest views to serve mankind in their best interests, and to these ends devotes his time, and those powers with which heaven hath distinguished him. There would be no end of referring you to, and pointing out the excellency of his numerous tracts hitherto unmentioned. His

His *Lectures on Oratory* abound with curious original matter and remarks, drawn from the best philosophy, and mark the inventive powers of their author. His *Lectures on History*, are a preliminary book to those studies, which was wanted in our language, and is not equalled in any. His *Ecclesiastical History* is intended only as a more popular work, written with a fidelity and impartiality never before seen, in noting the progress of religious opinions, accompanied with reflections and observations on men and things, peculiar to a comprehensive mind like his.

You will enjoy great satisfaction and benefit in perusing his various writings in controversy on theological subjects, all in defence of rational and just sentiments of moral duty, and of the true characters of God and of Jesus Christ, as taught in the sacred writings; his Treatise on Education; his Discourses from the pulpit, which shew a mind most enlightened, and that he has himself imbibed the true spirit and temper of the gospel, which he strives to instill into others; his *Appeal*, and all his lesser pieces, &c. &c. In a word, that person will have made no small advances in science and in virtue, who has read and approves Dr. Priestley's writings.

III.

IN the first chapter of this work, I present you, as I formerly (*d*) engaged, with a sample of the right method of interpreting the sacred writings, applicable to every subject treated on in them, though here confined to one only, *viz.* the person and character of Jesus Christ; who, and what sort of being
he

(*d*) *Vindiciæ Priestleianæ*, &c. p. 2.

he was, in the midst of the mighty controversies that have been for ages agitated concerning him: the discussion involving in it of course the question concerning the true God and object of worship. And I shall be happy, if I have succeeded, in delivering a fair state of the evidence, and in pointing out the conclusions which infallibly flow from it.

IV.

I HAD entertained a design also of proposing to you some examples of the *wrong* methods of explaining the sacred oracles, induced to it by observing the turn, which an author (*e*), in a very public situation, had just then given to many texts, relating to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the holy Spirit; and imagining that it might be of service to him and to his readers, to shew the many mistakes into which he had fallen.

But on a nearer inspection, I found, that no reply likely to be of any use, could be made to one, who had so strongly imbibed

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the

(*e*) Mr. Hawkins's Discourses at the Bampton-Lecture, for the year 1787.

the notion of a *Trinity of three, efficient, living, intelligent persons, the sovereign causes and rulers of all things*, as to fancy this trinitarian doctrine to have been current before the scriptures were written, and to be so necessary to explain them, that he scruples not to speak very magisterially of, and even to censure those sacred writings, if his own chimerical notions are not to be admitted.

‘ If, says Mr. Hawkins, p. 59, this doctrine, (*i. e.* of Christ’s divinity) was the doctrine of the church, previously to the publication of the holy writings, they are sufficiently full and explicit for the satisfaction, or confirmation of christians of all ages; if otherwise, *here is more than enough to perplex and misguide them, and to lead them into errors of the first magnitude.*

This avowal of Mr. Hawkins, that the doctrine of Christ’s divinity was not sufficiently declared in the sacred writings, makes it evident that those who receive only what those writings teach, cannot argue with him, or set him right in any thing.

In another place, soon after, he speaks with as little respect of St. Paul, as he here
does

does of the sacred writings, if the apostle does not allude to *his* imaginary *trinity*, of three intelligent, living persons. It is in his remark on Paul's farewell speech, or apostolical charge, as our author calls it, to the elders of Ephesus. In this speech it cannot be doubted that God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, are described, as two distinct, living, intelligent persons; but then, Jesus Christ, not as on a level with the Almighty, not as the Lord God Almighty; but such a *Lord*, as God *had made* him, Acts ii. 36; and as he is characterised by St. Luke throughout his history. Mr. Hawkins indeed cites the 28th verse; *Take heed—to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, as being really the words of the apostle himself; (*f*) making him to countenance the notion, first, of Christ being God; and next, the shocking idea of God shedding his blood, and dying. But scholars should be ashamed of

(*f*) The most judicious and impartial critics agree, that the apostle's words, were; either, *feed the church of God, so Watson* which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son: or, *feed the church of the Lord, (i. e. Christ) which he hath purchased with his own blood. See Webster, Grisebach.*

of abetting such acknowledged *false readings* of scripture. The apostle, it must be confessed, speaks also of the holy spirit, as a person, *witnessing*, and appointing persons to particular offices among them. But the uniform tenor of St. Luke's language in this book, and of the language of the bible throughout, shews, that by the *holy spirit* in such instances, is not to be understood, a living, intelligent agent, but the extraordinary power of God at that time bestowed on christians, and by a very common figure of speech, personified, spoken of as a person. And thus *the holy spirit witnessed in every city*, that St. Paul was to suffer imprisonment, &c. that is, it was signified by men who had the gift of the holy spirit, or who had a divine knowlege conferred upon them, in this instance. And the holy spirit (g) had made (or constituted) the men, whom

(g) Le Clerc here well remarks, that the reason of the apostle's using this language, was, because the teachers or bishops of each congregation were at first established by the apostles under the direction of the holy spirit. Parce-que les apôtres, ou leurs premier disciples, n' établissoient aucun evangeliste ou évêque, que par l' inspiration du S. esprit. Voyez 1 Tim. iv. 14.

whom Paul addressed, superintendants of the church, or congregation of christians at Ephesus; because they were appointed to that office, by the apostles, or by men that were under a divine impulse, or the direction of the holy spirit of God.

You will now judge of the propriety and decorum of Mr. Hawkins's treatment of the apostle upon this occasion. ' If we suppose, ' says he, p. 111. this apostolical charge to ' have been delivered to persons *pre-instructed* in ' the mystery of the gospel, agreeably to our ' representation of it; *i. e. to have been believers in the holy Trinity*, it must be acknowledged to contain words of *perspicuity*, ' *truth and soberness*; but on every other *supposition*, must not St. Paul have been thought ' by his audience, to have been beside himself?

But Mr. Hawkins does not confine his indecent reflections to the scriptures of the New Testament in general, as being written only to perplex and misguide; or to the apostle Paul's being a madman, if they and he had not a secret reference to his curious invented doctrine of a *Trinity of three efficient, living, intelligent persons, the sovereign causes and rulers*

lers of all things; but our Saviour himself must be aspersed, if his own heathenish system concerning him, be not true. ‘ It will
 ‘ corroborate what has already been advanced,
 ‘ says he, in his annotations, p. 313. to re-
 ‘ mark farther, that if Jesus Christ be any
 ‘ thing less than very God, by eternal ge-
 ‘ neration, *he was abundantly overpaid* for all
 ‘ he did and suffered for our sakes; *he was re-*
 ‘ *compensed beyond all measure*, by his exalt-
 ‘ ation to the right hand of the majesty on
 ‘ high; and by the divine honour and wor-
 ‘ ship which has been universally ascribed and
 ‘ paid to him.’

Without entering into the exact meaning of the metaphorical expression of *sitting at the right hand of God*, we may not hesitate to say, that Mr. Hawkins would have found that he overrated it, and that it did not imply any honour above that to which a human creature might aspire, if he had considered, that our Saviour himself says, Matt. xix. 28. that when the Son of man shall *sit on the throne of his glory*, his twelve disciples should also *sit upon twelve thrones*: and that in another place, to encourage *all* his followers
 to

to aim at the highest attainments of virtue, and fortitude in suffering in the cause of truth, he declares by a divine authority, Rev. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father on his throne.* Here, by the way, you see the ground of Christ's exaltation, whatever is to be understood by it; namely, that it was his consummate virtue and obedience to the supreme Father; which marks, without all doubt, his creature-like condition; and this language he uses concerning himself in the state of his highest exaltation in heaven.

As to the divine honour and worship paid to the blessed Jesus, which Mr. Hawkins ignorantly reckons so much upon, it is no more than has been, from early times, and is still given to his mother Mary, to name no other. And if, in both cases, it be equally undue and condemnable, because uncommanded in scripture, and contrary to the first of the commandments of God, given to Moses, and republished and recognized by Jesus Christ himself; it can be no credit to either of them, whilst it is a disgrace to their worshippers for
their

their supineness in not making a better use of their reasonable faculties, on so momentous a subject. Nay, *si quid mortalia tangunt*; if in that other world there be any knowledge of what is passing here, which we know not well how to conceive but that our Saviour must be in some degree or other possessed of: we cannot help thinking, but that it must give him some concern, to know of such an indignity cast upon the Almighty Being, by his followers putting himself, his creature and servant, on an equality with him, and rendering him equal honours. Also at the last scene of this present world, when the dead shall be raised, his mother Mary, who was a virtuous excellent person in her day, will be affected and humbled, if we may judge by our own feelings now, by the senseless worship which her son's disciples for so many ages have rendered to her, and still render.

But thus it is, and ever will be, where men adopt systems concerning the Divine Being, from human authority, without reason, and without a proper study of and attention to the scriptures. When they afterwards find, that these scriptures are not to be reconciled to,
but

but plainly contradict their favourite notions, instead of thinking that they themselves might possibly be mistaken, you find them censuring and vilifying the sacred penmen and their writings, and not sparing Christ himself, if their interpretation of his words be not true. These passionate expressions concerning him, much resemble the railings and other freedoms, which the heathens were wont to use and take with their false gods, when they did not please them, and things did not happen as their votaries expected. And it is only to be excused in both, as being the result of *indelible superstition* (*b*), nourished in them from their infancy,

(*b*) Sparrman, in his voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, gives us a curious instance of the kind, vol. i. p. 208. "Many of the colonists, says he, have likewise assured me, that their *Boskies-men* of either sex, used in stormy weather, to abuse the thunder in most reproachful expressions, and at the same time in a furious manner, with their shoes or any thing else that was at hand, menace and bid defiance to the flashes of lightning and peals of thunder that exploded and rolled over their heads. It would be in vain to try to make them sensible, that the vegetable creation, whence they and the brute animals, were nourished, would without rain, wither, and be intirely dried up: even the Hottentot I afterwards took into my service at Zwellendam, obstinate-
ly

infancy, without ever suffering themselves to examine into the grounds of it.

Characters, with no extraordinary powers from God, however meritorious and excellent, cannot be expected to receive better treatment, when they come in the way of men of such violent unreasonable prejudices. Accordingly, Mr. Hawkins, having made mention before of Mr. Locke, says of him farcaſtically, p. 67. ‘ Nevertheless, the *great philosopher* ‘ above mentioned, leaves the introduction to ‘ this gospel of St. John, and other passages ‘ in it of equal import, intirely unnoticed, as ‘ though it had no connection with his argument; which is a piece of *disingenuouf-* ‘ *ness* that one cannot avoid saying, did little ‘ credit to his cause, or to himself.’ And again,

ly persisted, in spite of all my objections, in the opinion, that notwithstanding this consideration, rain was always an evil, and that it would be a happy circumstance were it never to rain. A maxim of this kind from a race of men, in other respects really indued with some degree of sense, and frequently with no small share of penetration and cunning, ought, methinks, to be considered, as an *indelible religious, or superstitious notion, entertained by them from their infancy*, rather than as an idea taken up on mature deliberation and consequent conviction.”

again, p. 69. ‘ By Mr. Locke’s way of proceeding, *viz.* arbitrarily admitting, or rejecting scripture, we may mould christianity into what form we please; and to this way of proceeding, among other causes, we are to ascribe the various schisms and heresies, which have so long, and so deplorably divided the christian world.’

This imputation of dishonest dealing, in a thing which to a good mind would appear the most flagitious, *i. e.* in interpreting the word of God; is brought against this eminent person, of the most unblemished integrity, for this reason, among others, because he did not agree with Mr. Hawkins, in reckoning the person, whom St. John, at the end of his gospel, xx. 31, calls the *Christ*, the *Son of God*, to be the same with him, whom, at the beginning of it, he styles the *Word*, that *was with God*, and *was God*.

But might not Mr. Locke, without subjecting himself to such a charge, take the *Word*, in this proem of St. John’s gospel, not to be descriptive of Christ, but of the Almighty and infinite Being himself, under his character of Wisdom, as I trust has been

b

proved

proved to be the real intent of the evangelist, in the following work. It ill becomes creatures, the slaves of a thousand prejudices, as we are, when any one differs from us, (especially on religious subjects, in which we ought to believe all men sincere, unless we have the fullest assurance to the contrary) immediately to declaim against them, as if the heart was in fault, and they had some unfair design in it. This is not following our master's golden rule, Matth. vii. 12.

Mr. Hawkins being sensible that our Lord in his life-time, was unquestionably looked upon, by many of his disciples, in no higher a light than that of a prophet, or divine messenger, after some awkward concessions of the kind, satisfies himself nevertheless, ' that our Saviour's resurrection, p. 65. by virtue of his own as well as his Father's power, cleared up a thousand difficulties in a moment, and amounted to a full demonstration of his divinity.' We may not doubt of this being the effect, produced by the awful event in our author's mind; but it certainly had no such effect upon any of the apostles, or first christians, of whom we have any au-

How often is your amiable friend & friend thus treated? Do they not talk much of his spite and malice against Jesus Christ?

thentic accounts. This I persuade myself, has been fully made to appear, in the subsequent work, by a minute examination of every passage relating to the subject, in St. Luke's second treatise, and history of the gospel, continued for upwards of thirty years after our Lord's resurrection. And I have great satisfaction in having been put upon this particular inquiry by Mr. Hawkins, as it has given me an opportunity of drawing forth and exhibiting, even beyond my own expectation, the most overwhelming evidence of the following facts, clear and plain to every understanding, and which all men, who believe the scriptures, sooner or later must bow down to and acknowledge: namely;

1. That there is ONE GOD, one single person, who is God, the sole creator and sovereign lord of all things;

2. That the holy JESUS was a man of the jewish nation, the servant of this God, highly honoured and distinguished by him; and,

3. That the SPIRIT, or HOLY SPIRIT, was not a person, or intelligent being; but only the extraordinary power or gift of God, imparted, first (Acts i. 2.) to our Lord Jesus

Christ himself, in his life-time ; and, afterwards, to the apostles, and many of the first christians, to impower them to preach and propagate the gospel with success : and

4. That this was the doctrine concerning God, and Christ, and the holy Spirit, which was taught by the apostles, and preached to jews and heathens.

V.

The scripture being thus most plain, and express upon the subject of the Divine Unity, of there being one single person only who is God, and creator and governor of all things ; it must appear very astonishing to those, who have not leisure or means to examine into the history of the christian church, how it was possible for them, at so early a period, to vary so much from the scripture, especially with respect to the person of Christ, as some among them actually did.

This is the subject of inquiry, in the second chapter of this treatise ; in which Justin Martyr is assigned as the first who ascribed divinity to Christ, by maintaining (see p. 171)
 * that before his works of creation, God produced

* duced from himself a rational power or agent,' stiled in scripture, God, the Word, the Son, &c. who was his instrument in the creation, and his substitute and representative afterwards, in the appearances made to the patriarchs, and at the giving of the law to Moses, &c. and was afterwards united to the man Christ Jesus.

In what way, and from what source it was, that the prejudices of learned christians, at that time, led them to entertain such a strange idea of Christ, has been very clearly shewn by Dr. Priestley, who, above all men, has the talent of making abstruse things plain to ordinary capacities. See his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, vol. i. section ii. (i)

Eulogium

b 3

In

(i) The title of this section, is; ' Of the first step that was made towards the deification of Christ, by the personification of the Logos.'

The doctrine of these early philosophic christians, was; that the logos, *i. e.* the word, the reason, the wisdom of the Father, which had been in him from all eternity, was made a person a little before the creation, and employed by the Almighty in the creation, and government of the world, and afterwards became man.

' Thus Irenæus, Tertullian, and others, says Mr. Whiston, after philosophy came in, ventured to affirm that the

' Son

In that section he has thrown out in a general way, what had been observed also by others, and I thought it might be of service to see it more particularly explained, concerning Justin, that he was the man, who misled all antiquity, in respect of the true character, and person of Christ.

Should it not however be allowed, that Justin was the first author and inventor of this great corruption of the christian doctrine, and was copied in it by those that came after him, which I am myself persuaded of, and have asserted by arguments that appear satisfactory : the fact will nevertheless be true, that all antiquity

‘ Son was in a secret manner in the Father, *before* his generation or creation ; and that he was made out of a *part of the substance* of the Father, as Tertullian asserts. And, in another place, he remarks, more explicitly ; That sort of *eternity* of the Son of God, of which some of the fathers began to speak towards the latter part of the second century, was plainly, not a real existence, as of a Son properly coeternal with his Father, by a true eternal generation ; but rather a *metaphysic existence, in potentia*, or in the like higher and sublimer manner *in* the Father, as his *wisdom, or word*, before his real creation or generation : which real creation or generation was then even supposed to be a little before the creation of the world.’ Primitive Christianity revived, vol. i. pref. p. vii. lxix.

tiquity have blindly followed in the track that he struck into, in direct deviation from the scriptures, whoever, or whatsoever led them into it.

I flatter myself that this inquiry, which I have been led to make, will be both useful and pleasant. Those who wish to know the true state of facts, and what relates to the most important thing in the world, the religion they profess, will be glad to see what arguments were used by a worthy man so near *Justin A* the time of the apostles, by which, in a course of time, all the world was turned away from the true scripture-doctrine concerning Jesus Christ. I have also given some little account of the eminent christian writers who immediately followed, and who copied him in this matter; and have given some instances of their dogmatic stile in writing, dealing intirely in assertions without proof, by which this polytheism of Justin's was carried on.

And these remains of the early *fathers*, as they are called, are to be cherished, preserved, and studied by us; because they shew, upon what principle, from what prejudices, and through what ignorance, misrepresentation,

and perversion of the sacred writings, they were misled to apply parts of those writings, to Christ, which did not belong to him, and thereby to make him quite another being than what he really was.

A proper observation of these facts will quiet the minds of christians, with respect to the great and important errors, which obtained so early in their religion; I mean, particularly, that of the worship of Christ, as a second God; which has now been common among the greater part of christians near 1500 years.

As they will perceive that such worship of more Gods than one, began from Justin's perverting the scriptures from their true sense, and planting his own heathen philosophy upon them: they will be so far from dreading, (which has been the case with many,) that true religion will be hurt by extirpating such errors, of however so long standing, that they will have the good sense to see, that it can only be hurt by letting them continue to grow. And so far from being offended with those, who tell them, that they have all their lives long been bowing to and worshipping those who are no Gods, they will be thankful,

ful, and esteem it the greatest favour, to be set right in such important points; and will be ready to reason thus calmly and candidly on the subject.

‘ If I were a worshiper of the virgin *Mary*,
 ‘ and accustomed to pray to her daily, as all
 ‘ the members of the greek and romish
 ‘ churches are bound, and are wont to do;
 ‘ I certainly should not think it amiss for any
 ‘ one in a friendly sort, to remind me of my
 ‘ error, and give me reasons, why I ought no
 ‘ longer to pray to a dead woman, who can-
 ‘ not hear or help me.

‘ I ought not then surely to take it ill of
 ‘ those, who lay before me no less strong
 ‘ reasons from the sacred writings, why I
 ‘ ought not to pray to *Jesus (k)*, the Son
 ‘ of *Mary*; who, although not dead, but
 ‘ raised to life by the power of God, is still
 ‘ a human being, nor has any power given
 ‘ him to hear our prayers, and to help us.’

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(k) *Jesus the Son of Mary*] So is our Lord called by St. Luke, after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven. Acts. i. 11.

The idea which christians entertained at first of God, and of Christ, were plain and simple; such as we have seen, and such as are delivered in the old and new Testament. By degrees, the learned, who followed Justin's notion of a second God, prevailed over common christians, who were taught by the apostles; and adopted other ideas of the deity, such as were not taken from the word of God, but from philosophic and scholastic learning: which latter consists chiefly of words without meaning. But every thing of importance is delivered in such plain and clear terms in the bible, that there is just reason to distrust all doctrines concerning God, which require a great deal of acuteness and subtlety to be made use of to explain them.

One is concerned to see that truly apostolical character, Archbishop Tillotson, with his good understanding, intangled in this cobweb sophistry of the schools, so as not to be able to extricate himself.

In his " Sermon concerning the unity of
 " the divine nature, and the blessed Trini-
 " ty," &c. vol. i. p. 488. it is obvious, to
 what a degree, this most worthy person im-
 posed

posed upon himself, by the abstruse terms *nature, the divine nature*. Of the natural attributes of God, and his moral perfections, if we may so speak, (for all our language concerning HIM must ever be imperfect,) *viz.* his power, wisdom, and goodness; if in these the *nature* of the deity be said to consist, we gain some knowlege thereof from our reflections and reasonings on our own frame, and on the world around us, and still more from his revealed word. But if by *nature*, be understood that internal constitution of things and beings, which makes them severally what they are, we certainly know nothing of our own nature, or of that of the most inconsiderable thing about us, much less of the *divine nature*. And it is remarkable, that so far from giving us instructions in any thing of this kind concerning the Divine Being, our Saviour himself did not even teach the existence and unity of God, but referred men to what Moses had taught before him, Mark xii. 28. 29. 30. from whose writings doubtless he had drawn his own knowlege on this great subject. So that assuredly our Lord came not, was not commissioned, to teach us
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any thing concerning the *divine nature*, but concerning the divine will and benignity towards us; and what it is that he requireth of us to do, for our good always, and to secure his everlasting favour.

If then the Archbishop had not imposed on himself by using words without meaning, *viz.* the *unity of the divine nature*, instead of the *unity of the Divine Being*, his honest mind and good sense would have led him to see, that this latter unity cannot be predicated of, cannot belong to more persons than one. And he would have avoided that disgraceful conclusion of his sermon, in which however of course, he has been followed by others, namely; “ There is one God: To *him*, ‘ *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, be all honour, &c.’ Here, to call *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, *HIM*; is in violation of every rule of grammatical concord, of arithmetic, and of common sense; and what would not be excused even in a school-boy.

THE LAST CHAPTER of this work exhibits a catalogue of those false readings of the scripture,

scripture, and wrong translations of it in our english bible, which countenance the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Divinity of Christ.

As I have prefixed remarks to that part in it's place, it will not be needful to add any thing farther here. But I shall content myself with observing; that those who have not leisure for these inquiries, have a just claim upon others for the fruits of their studies. And if the sacred writings, especially those of the New Testament, through neglect or design, have been depraved and altered, as most assuredly they have been, so as to make them lean to the doctrine of more Gods than one, it is a duty to point out, and to make understood, where such corruption of the truth hath taken place; that no longer two Gods, equal to the Father, *i.e.* the Son and the holy Spirit, unknown to prophets and apostles, brought into the christian church by heathen men full of false science, may be named or heard of among christians: and that at length, the knowlege and worship of the one, only true God, the Father, and sole creator of all things, taught and practised by the blessed Jesus and his apostles, may be restored,

restored, and obtain throughout the whole world.

I must not omit to acknowledge, that I take much blame to myself, for having, in the former part of this work, without just grounds, included Dr. Price in bishop Butler's gloomy conclusions concerning the character of the moral Governor of the world; whose notions in this respect that excellent person is as far from approving, as from countenancing the bishop's metaphysical superficial way of introducing two new deities among christians, without ever in any proper way consulting the Bible about them; which he would have found to condemn every thing of the sort.

I should indeed be in pain, if in any thing of importance to morals, or true religion, I differed from Dr. Price; whose judgment and heart I must ever honour; who from the first of my coming to settle in this great city, has been one of my chief friends; whom to know is the same as to esteem and love; one, in whose society you are safe, easy, improved and happy, and therefore his friendship is coveted by all; and who, whilst
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a few by speaking not so well of him, make eminent virtue pay only her wonted tax, enjoys the approbation of all the wise and good of his own country, for his excellent principles, and defences of civil and religious liberty, and is held in grateful esteem and veneration by foreign nations.

TO

OT

TO THE
STUDENTS
OF THE
TWO UNIVERSITIES.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

The knowledge of Christ treated of in this Work.

THE most important knowledge of Jesus Christ, is that, of which St. Paul discoursed in such lofty strains, (but for which all description is too low) when he prays for his friends at Ephesus, Eph. iii. 18. 19. that they might be able to comprehend with all christians, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the surpassing love of the knowledge of Christ: i. e. that they might become acquainted, and properly impressed, with that stupendous benignity of the heavenly Father of all, which moved him to make the holy Jesus his honoured instrument in bringing

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ing the whole race of mankind to virtue, and an eternal felicity. Goodness, beyond all thought; for creatures of yesterday, such as we are, to be put into a capacity of living again when these present scenes shall be over, and of living for ever! The mind must be dead, as a stone, to whatever is great, and good, and excellent, that is not excited thereby not to lose such immortal hopes.

This is the knowledge of Christ, in which we are most interested; and which is alone spoken of in the sacred writings. And for ever blessed and honoured be the name of Jesus, especially by us of mankind! who after a laborious life, spent in teaching men virtue, and true religion, was willing to resign it in the extremest torments, for the same great end; that we might be also ready (1 John iii. 16.) *to lay down our lives*, to exert every benevolent endeavour to promote the virtue and happiness of others.

But there is another knowledge of Jesus Christ, namely, who he was, and among what class of beings he is to be ranked, concerning which he never seems to have had the least apprehension, that there would be any diversity of opinion among his followers: and yet no small dissention about it began in the days of his apostles; and in process of time, it was carried to great height and violence, owing chiefly to the interference of the magi-

magistrate in taking upon him to decide in a matter intirely out of his province: so that from the year of our Lord 325, to the present year 1790, it has been in a high degree penal, in all christian countries, openly to dissent from what the civil powers established as the true doctrine concerning Christ. In our own country, the punishment was being burnt alive, untill so late as the reign of Charles II: and the penalty at this day is imprisonment, with many grievous and cruel disabilities, was the law suffered to have its course. So that to fix ourselves rightly in a just knowlege of Christ, is, on many accounts, a very serious business.

In the bible, from whence alone authentic information can be drawn, the question, who Jesus Christ was, seems the plainest of all others, and easily solved, by those who can peruse that book without prejudice.

But to what a degree the subject has been intangled by the wit and ingenuity of those, who were led to believe that there was some great mystery contained in it, and how much wise and good men have been embarrassed by it, you will perhaps best see in an instance, that has recently been laid before the public.

The late pious and justly celebrated Dr. Watts(a), left behind him a short tract, to be published after

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his

(a) The public who wish thoroughly to know Dr. Watts's character, and sentiments, and who have no opportunity of perusing

his death, and which most probably contained his last sentiments relating to this point. It is drawn up in the form of a prayer to God, and intitled, 'The Author's Solemn Address to the great and ever blessed God, on a review of what he had written in the Trinitarian controversy.' The picture of a truly devout mind, in such a situation, is most curious, and edifying; as we have the sentiments of the heart laid open with all sincerity before God, being not intended to be seen by any one whilst he lived: and it is impossible to contemplate it, without being deeply affected with that state of perplexity, and uncertainty, in which this worthy person represents himself, after all his researches, whether the God whom he was to worship, consisted of one or more persons, if we may so speak. I shall select a few passages.

P. 101. "*Permit me, O God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy gospel: and let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe of thy Majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.*"

P. 102.

praising his voluminous works, are under great obligations to the ingenious author of "*The Life of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D. by Samuel Johnson, LL.D. with notes, containing animadversions and additions. London, 1785.*" From this publication the citations are here made.

P. 102. — “Hast thou not ascribed divine (b) names, and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy holy Spirit in thy word, as well as assumed them to thyself? And hast not thou appointed to them such glorious offices as cannot be exercised without something of divinity or true godhead in them? And yet, art not thou, and thou alone, the true God? How shall a poor weak creature be able to adjust and reconcile these clashing ideas, and to understand this mystery? Or must I believe, and act, blindfold, without understanding?”

P. 104. “I yield myself up joyfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed in thy gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine of the all-sufficiency of thy Son and Spirit, for these divine works, made a little plainer. May not thy humble-creature be permitted to know what share they can have in thy deity? Is it a vain and sinful curiosity to desire to have this article set in such a light, as may not diminish the eternal glory of the unity of the true Godhead, nor of the supremacy of Thee, the Father of all?”

P. 105. “Hadst thou informed me, gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were

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required

(b) The reader may see this particular argument urged with great ingenuity, and answered in *An Examination of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge's plea for the divinity of Christ*. Printed for Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard.

required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith.—But I cannot find thou hast any where forbid me to understand it, or to make these inquiries.—I have therefore been long searching into this divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honour with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship: whether he be one pure and simple being; or whether thou art a threefold deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit?

P. 107. “Thou hast called the poor and the ignorant, the mean and foolish things of this world, to the knowledge of thyself and thy Son.—But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this; in the explication and defence whereof, multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtilties of disputes, and endless mazes of darkness? And can this strange and perplexing notion of three real persons going to make up one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of that christian doctrine, which, in the old testament, and the new, is represented as so plain and easy, even to the meanest understandings?

P. 111. “Help me, heavenly Father; for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it

to me thyself, O my God, by the secret dictates (c) of thy spirit, according to the intimations of thy word?—I intreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short life to be wasted in such endless wanderings, in quest of thee and thy son Jesus, as a great part of my days have been; but let my sincere endeavours to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such success, that my soul being established in every needful truth by thy holy spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of thy gospel, and may, with all the holy and happy creation, ascribe glory and honour, wisdom

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and

(c) It was the misfortune of this worthy person, to have received such a deep impression of the doctrine of a Trinity, from his education in his youth, of there being three divine persons making up one true God, that it cleaved to him through life, though he was at times wavering about it. He had been taught to call it a mystery, as the fabricators of it might well term it; understanding thereby a thing difficultly, or not at all to be comprehended. This turned his pious mind to apply to heaven to have his doubts removed, by some secret divine aid and illumination. But no illustration of any revealed doctrine can be expected from Almighty God in any other way than by a diligent study of the sacred writings, which contain it. Unhappily Dr. Watts was perplexed all his life, in looking into those writings, for what was not to be found in them; as hath been often shewn by many, and I trust will fully appear to every one who peruses this present work.

and power to thee, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

Thus this eminent Divine, ingenious in a high degree, and studious to the last, with acuteness, and critical talents equal (*d*) to the investigation of the true sense of the sacred writings, as he greatly excelled in the art of recommending its truths to the heart; after all his labour and researches, appears to have gone out of the world, unsettled and unsatisfied with respect to the God he was to worship. He could not divest himself of his early prejudices in favour of the received interpretation of certain texts, relating to Christ and the holy spirit; still thinking something of *divinity or true godhead*, as he speaks, belonging to the Son and Spirit, and yet not able to reconcile it to that strong conviction of the Divine Unity, of the single person of the God and parent of all, with which he seems deeply penetrated throughout the whole of his prayer.

It is then a point of importance to settle, who Jesus Christ, the founder of our religion, was:
 1. whether one of the human race, gifted with extra-
 2. ordinary divine powers, or a great angelic spirit,
 3. existing before all ages; or is he God, equal to
the supreme? A solution of this question, such as all

(*d*) See a fine specimen of this in his note on Matt. xviii. 19. a few pages below.

St. Matthew's Case.

all may agree in, cannot but be desirable, and acceptable to all serious persons.

There are some who condemn all such disquisitions, as serving only to perplex mens minds, upon a matter about which they suppose they will continue to quarrel, as they have hitherto done, to the end of time. And it is confessed, that there might be cause to despair of adjusting the long dispute, if right methods had been pursued, and failed. But this I trust to be able to shew has not been done. Those persons, who have taken the lead in, or given the vogue to the doctrine, which makes Christ to be the eternal God, or the first of beings next to him, and his instrument in the creation, have consulted the scriptures with an undue bias upon their minds, with a system of opinions already formed, and derived from other sources. As the true philosophy of nature, or an acquaintance with the great Creator's works around us, can only be advanced by building knowledge upon fact and experience: so can our knowledge of what it has pleased him supernaturally to discover to us, of himself, and his designs, be alone obtained by searching the records that contain those discoveries; and it is remarkable, that much within the same period of about a century and a half past, by going upon the same ground in both cases, a greater insight into the natural system hath been acquired than in all preceding ages, and more also hath been accomplished

towards a right understanding of the sacred volume during the same interval, than since the time of the apostles, especially in our own country.

We are however still but new in the business. Much remains to be done, by farther critical inquiries, to shew, to the satisfaction of all, what were the sentiments of the apostles concerning their lord and master, how the language of scripture was understood by those, for whose use it was immediately written; and how Christ's countrymen, and cotemporaries, interpreted, what he spoke concerning himself, or what his apostles said of him: which seems to be the way of coming at the knowledge of what he taught, and of who he really was.

SECTION II.

The evidence of St. Matthew concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

To know then who Christ was, we must go to those who have given an account of him, and who had the opportunity of obtaining full information upon the subject, at the time, and upon the spot, where and when he lived: who were also persons of probity and good sense; and whose works have come down to us with sufficient exactness

exactness and authenticity. Such are the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There is a difference of opinion, among learned men, with regard to the date of their respective writings; but it is probable, that they drew up and published their memoirs of their divine master, nearly at the same time.

Matthew, whose gospel is first placed, was our lord's countryman, and one of his apostles; and by living and conversing with him, during the greatest part of his public ministry, had the means of being well acquainted with the things that he relates of him. And he describes him altogether, as a human being; a descendant of Abraham and David, their two great progenitors; born of his mother Mary as other infants, only produced in her, by the extraordinary power of God, as the first of our race was formed; in other respects resembling the rest of us, living and dying: so that no one would, or did take him for any other than one of mankind, with high powers from God, and a commission, to teach his will, and the way to eternal life.

You will find but two passages in his gospel, that carry even the appearance of Christ being to be deemed, originally, any other than a human creature, however now deservedly exalted in the divine favour. These must be briefly considered, lest they should be thought to have more weight than they really have.

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The first is, Matth. i. 23. *Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name, Emanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.*

These words are from Isaiah vii. 14: and were no more intended by the prophet to foretell any thing concerning Christ, than the words soon after cited by our evangelist, ii. 17. 18, from Jeremiah xxxi. 15. were to predict the grief and concern of the parents, whose children Herod had put to death. But they are both quoted by the apostle, (after the manner of the jews in those times, who loved to cite their sacred books on all occasions,) as containing something that might be accommodated to the present purpose. Nothing however can be more groundless than to suppose, that because the apostle applies to Jesus those words of the prophet, *they shall call his name, Emanuel, viz. God with us*; that therefore he held Jesus to be God Almighty. For the phrase, *they shall call his name, Emanuel, God with us*, implies only in the present case, that the person to whom it is applied, should (*d*) deserve to be so called on account of some extraordinary kindness of God manifested to the world by him. And that nothing

(*d*) See Is. ix. 6. lxii. 4. Jerem. iii. 17. xxxiii. 16. Ezek. xlvi. 35. &c. where the same phrase bears this signification.

nothing more was meant by it, is confirmed by this fact, that you never find that it was a name by which Jesus went. (e)

The other passage is, Matth. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy ghost.* The greater part of christians on hearing or reading this form of baptism, instantly conclude, from its having been instilled into them from their very infancy, that it teaches three persons to be each of them God; or, in the words of the creed ascribed to Athanasius, that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the holy ghost or spirit, God. But you will think it right, not to take an interpretation to be true without examination, that teaches there are three persons, who are each of them God: and will hold it your duty to inquire for yourselves, what Christ himself intended by this language; and also how his disciple Matthew, who heard and who alone hath recorded these words, understood them.

Now you will find, that throughout his gospel, this evangelist introduces our Saviour, constantly and invariably speaking but of one person, as God; whom he calls, and frequently addresses in

(e) But see this text with great ability and more at large explained, in the 3d Number of Friend's Review of Mr. Goulthurst's texts.

prayer, by the title of *father*, i. e. the author of his being and all its blessings: and whom he directs his followers to invoke, as their *father*, Matth. vi. 9. i. e. as equally the author of their beings. St. Matthew also lets you know, that there was nothing so peculiar in Christ styling God his Father, as if it pointed to his having any nature different from ours; since Christ no less speaks of God as being our *Father* in the following places, v. 18. 45. 48. vi. 6. 8. 9. 14. 15. 18. 32. vii. 11. x. 20. 29.

The appellation, *the Son*, which our Lord here gives himself, and which is often given him, i. e. *the Son of God*; in its primary sense, indicates only that he had his origin from God, as all his rational creation, Luke iii. 38. It also signifies the being especially dear to God, and favoured by him: in which sense it is given to all christians, (John iii. 1, 2.) his followers, as well as to himself. And in this sense, it is sometimes peculiar, and appropriated to the holy Jesus, as being the Christ, the Messiah, the *Son of God*, by way of eminence: which are all synonymous phrases, when applied to Jesus; and mark only his high office, and dignity, bestowed on him by Almighty God, and not any difference or distinction of nature, from that of other men.

As to the notion of a subtle metaphysical generation of Christ, from God, before the world was made,

made, supposed to be conveyed by the term *Son*; which, learned men invented and pleased themselves with, when they became ashamed of having one for the author of their religion, who had suffered an ignominious death, and wanted to exalt him above the condition of a man: this was a thing quite foreign to the thoughts of this disciple of Jesus, Matthew, the toll-gatherer. The evangelists were not philosophers, or metaphysicians, any more than their divine master. And yet this is the mystic, unintelligible sense, in which the defenders of the divinity of Christ, modern as well as ancient, take refuge, when driven from all other resources and arguments both of reason and scripture; viz. that he was the Son of God by an eternal generation (*g*).

In respect of the *holy ghost* or *holy spirit*, into whose name also disciples were to be baptized, the passages, where Matthew speaks of it, are the following.

Matt. iii. 16. *He saw the Spirit of God descending upon him.*

Matt.

(*g*) " That Jesus is the *Christ*, the *Messiah*, the *Son of God*, which are names synonymous, the scriptures teach, (said a valuable writer,) and they confirm the truth by miracles and prophecy. But the *Son of God* is a title of dignity and office; and the phrase is abused, when it is made to signify a Son begotten before all worlds, or a son existing from eternity, or indeed existing before his mother's conception.

Matt. iv. 1. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

— x. 20. *It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*

— xii. 18. *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; I will put my spirit upon him.*

— — 28. *If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God.*

— — 31. *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be forgiven.*

— — 32. *Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the holy spirit, it shall not be forgiven him.*

— xxii. 43. *How then doth David in spirit call him, Lord?*

You will find no other place, in which our evangelist mentions *the spirit, the spirit of God, the holy spirit*; and in all these it evidently signifies only the extraordinary power of God.

In the passage now under consideration, the holy spirit, the extraordinary power and gift of the Almighty, by which the gospel was at first
attested

attested and propagated, is spoken of as a person, (g) into whose name they were to be baptized; a figure of speech most frequent in the scriptures.

To be *baptized into the name* of any person, is to be enlisted under them; to submit themselves to their direction. So 1 Cor. x. 2. the Israelites are said to have been baptized into Moses: in which the apostle has respect to Exod. xiv. 31. where they are spoken of as *believing God and his servant Moses*; i. e. they engaged themselves to be directed by them.

Having thus explained the apostle's sense of the several terms used: I ask; CAN it be supposed, that a chosen disciple of Christ, an apostle, and personal attendant upon him, who wrote with a design

(g) The apostle John characterizes the *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*, which Christ promised to his followers, as a Divine person, that should be with them, plead for them, and direct them, xiv. 16. 17. 26. xvi. 7. 13. 14; when it was nothing but the gifts of a divine power, or wisdom, which he speaks of, and personifies; and which, according to our Lord's promise, were imparted to them after his resurrection. In like manner, the *Holy Spirit* is spoken of as a Person, in this form of baptism. The same figure of speech is frequently met with in the Acts and the Epistles. Acts xv. 28. *It seemeth good to the Holy Spirit and to us*, say the apostles; i. e. to us directed by a divine extraordinary impulse and assistance, on the occasion. This is explained and confirmed, ver. 8. where the same persons, i. e. the apostles, say of the converted gentiles, *God gave them the holy ghost*, rather *the holy Spirit*, even as he did unto us: plainly signifying it to be an extraordinary divine gift, or power, that was conferred.

sign to give all necessary information relating to the gospel, should, at the very end of his book, bring in his master Jesus, speaking of two persons, himself and the holy spirit, being each of them God, equal with the Father, acquainting them with a thing of such magnitude abruptly, only at the moment of his leaving them, which he had never taken the least notice of before: WHEN moreover throughout his preceding book, he had described the holy Jesus, merely, as one of the human race, and also related his constantly speaking of himself as such only; and the spirit, or holy spirit, never mentioned by him in his history, or by Christ, as being any thing more than the extraordinary power of God? No: no: NEITHER Christ himself nor his evangelist, appear to have had any the most remote idea of the kind; and all that Matthew would understand to be intended by this form of baptism, would be, in accord with what Jesus, his lord and master, had all along taught: viz. that his followers were, by the ceremony of baptism, to be initiated into the religion of the gospel, which came, as from its source, from God, the benevolent Father of all; was delivered to them by Christ, his chosen servant, (xii. 18.) and beloved son, and was finally confirmed by the holy spirit, by the attestation and the gift of a divine power, to Christ, and to his apostles and immediate followers. WHOEVER therefore is disposed

Explanation

posed to believe what is called a *trinity*, or any person to be God but the Father, must seek for it elsewhere; for the apostle Matthew appears certainly to have known nothing of the matter; nor does the blessed Jesus himself, in any language cited as used in this evangelist's writings, ever arrogate any thing of *deity*, as belonging to him; but quite the contrary.

There is an admirable note of Dr. Watts's, on this passage of St. Matthew, which shews what a liberal, and judicious critic in the scriptures, he was capable of having been in all respects, if his judgment had not been overawed and cramped in early youth; and which also manifests, that at the time of writing it, he did not reckon upon this form of baptism in our evangelist, as any proof of the doctrine of a Trinity, to be relied on.

“ If there be any particular doctrine, says he, or duty, which I find written but in one single text of scripture, or expressed but darkly; I should reasonably conclude, that the Great God designed not that doctrine, or that duty, to be of very great importance in the christian life. For a dark expression is much more easily mistaken, as to the true sense of it; and a single text is much more liable to be miscopied; or dropped by a transcriber, or to be misconstrued by a translator, or overseen or neglected by a common reader or

hearer: and the Great God would not put matters of high importance on so doubtful and dangerous a foot, and leave things necessary at such uncertainties; lest honest and humble inquirers should, after all their pains, mistake their way to heaven." Dr. Watts's Works, vol. iii. p. 691, &c.

He then proceeds particularly to shew, that our Saviour's form and order of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19. being but once expressed, and by one sacred writer, is not an exception to this rule, nor was any great weight to be laid upon it; for these reasons:

1. "Because there is never an actual example, or instance of this compleat form of baptism, practiced, in any place of scripture.

2. "When the business of baptism is mentioned in several places in the Epistles, it is generally declared, that baptism was performed in the name of the Lord Jesus. Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

"I think therefore, concludes he, the rule may stand good still; that when a doctrine, or a duty is mentioned but in one place of scripture, it cannot be of absolute necessity to salvation."—Dr. Watts then, would not have disapproved, if he would not rather have commended, those, who laid aside the common baptismal form, and baptized only into the name of Jesus.

COROL-

C O R O L L A R Y.

Thus is there nothing to be found in St. Matthew's gospel, that implies his having had the least thought, that his divine master Jesus was any other than a human being, with extraordinary powers from God, to fill the great office intrusted with him, for promoting the virtue and final happiness of mankind.

S E C T I O N III.

*The evidence of St. Mark concerning the person of
Jesus Christ.*

St. Mark, the author of the gospel, that is put next in order, and that goes by his name, was an attendant upon and fellow-labourer with the apostles. His history of Christ is credibly reported to have been inspected by the apostle Peter, and therefore may be presumed to give also that apostle's sentiments. It opens at the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, and appearance, in the character of the great prophet of God, the Christ, the Messiah; and closes with his unjust death upon the cross, and being afterwards raised to life again in three days, by the divine power.

And throughout the whole of it, there is not any thing recorded of him, but what belongs to a human creature, endowed with communications of a divine wisdom and supernatural power.

SECTION IV.

The evidence of St. Luke concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

St. Luke, was a companion of the apostle Paul in his travels to preach the gospel; much beloved and esteemed by him. He was a very early believer; if he was not also a disciple of Christ himself, as some have conjectured, and one of those to whom our Lord made himself known the very day of his resurrection. It is probable, that he was acquainted with the other apostles, as well as St. Paul; and therefore may be reckoned to speak their sentiments equally with his own. And it is remarkable, that there is not one circumstance to be met with in his gospel memoirs that bespeaks him to have held or believed the Lord Jesus to have been any other than one of the jewish nation, a divine prophet or messenger, highly favoured above all other prophets, by greater divine communications, and a more important message.

Corollaries

COROLLARIES deducible from the joint testimonies of the three former evangelists, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The concurring sentiments of these three former evangelists, that Christ was a human being, and not God, or of a condition superior to man, are of great weight. Affuredly they knew nothing of their master Jesus being God, or a great pre-existent spirit, or they would have told us. They would have been wanting in their duty, if they had not mentioned a circumstance of such magnitude, as they undertook to give their fellow-christians, and to leave behind them, an account of so important a character, for the benefit of posterity. And we may be the more assured, they would not have omitted a thing of this moment; as they never intimate that there would be any other historian to come after them, who would supply their deficiencies. They appear then to have gone out of the world themselves, believing Christ to have been one of the human species, and not belonging to any higher class of beings, and desirous that others should so think of him. And we must therefore from their testimony necessarily conclude that he was such.

2. This affords the strongest presumption, that their fellow-evangelist St. John was entirely of the same sentiment with them; especially as this last

never tells us, that he was honoured with any peculiar revelations concerning the person of Christ, which were not imparted to the other apostles.

But though St. John himself never says, that he was commissioned to deliver any thing of a higher nature concerning his master Jesus, than his fellow-apostles, others have supposed it for him, and ascertained, that it was his peculiar province to treat of his divinity and preexistence. And this fancy having been thrown out by some of the fathers, has been long the popular belief; and is to be found in most commentators (*b*). Our business will be now to shew, that there is no ground to believe that John differed, in these matters, from the other evangelists, or reckoned his divine master to be any other than a human being.

The sentiments of this evangelist have been before considered, in another place. But it is necessary to take them in here, to compleat my argument.

(*b*) Hardy says, without hesitation, in his preface to his New Testament; " John perused and approved the gospels of the three former evangelists, and supplied what they had omitted, &c. and as they treated of Christ's humanity, he, at the desire of the bishops of Asia, wrote concerning his deity." This Jerom had said before him, who wanted to support the popular doctrine of the times by John's testimony. But Jerom comes too late to know any thing of the evangelist's real design in writing, which can best and only be known from his own words.

ment. And some things, I hope, may be placed in a stronger and juster point of view than before. I shall therefore review those passages in this evangelist which are particularly relied on for asserting Christ to be God, or a great preexistent spirit: and as the greater part of christians look upon the preface of St. John's gospel, as quite decisive on this point with respect to his divinity, I shall begin with a minute inquiry into it.

S E C T I O N V.

The evidence of St. John concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

Of the introduction to St. John's gospel.

It is generally agreed, that St. John composed his history of Christ the last of all the evangelists; and it is very probable, that it was drawn up, and published, a little before, or at the breaking out of the jewish war, A. D. 68; when the gospel had been for some years preached to jews and gentiles, but was still rejected by many, and frowned upon by the ruling powers. Of this, as will be seen, there is some intimation given in his preface.

Our apostle tells us, that his design in writing was to furnish a sufficient number of authentic miracles,

racles, out of many more wrought by Jesus, such as might prove him to be the Christ, their promised great prophet, who was to teach mankind the way to eternal life.—xx. 30. 31. *Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written (i), that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

And

(i) Some of the early christian fathers, who took up their opinions from their philosophy, and not from consulting the scriptures, imagining Christ to be the logos, the *Word*, mentioned by St. John in the beginning of his gospel, were thence carried away with a notion, as was just now intimated, that our evangelist's principal design in his additional history of Christ after that of the other three evangelists, was to treat of Christ's divinity, which had been less attended to by the others. And this opinion has been all along, and is still embraced by many. But a writer's own declaration concerning his intention is certainly to be taken before the fancies and conjectures of others. And the apostle here expressly says, that he had drawn up his account to prove ^{not} that Jesus was ~~not~~ God; but the Christ, the Son of God: by which could only be understood, that Jesus was the great promised prophet and teacher of the will of God, who was, and was foretold to be, of a particular tribe and family among the jews, and was therefore of course a human creature, and not belonging to any higher class of beings. It is to be hoped, that no one will henceforth take upon him to contradict this apostle, and say that his design in his gospel was to treat of Christ's divinity, when he himself asserts the direct contrary.

Justin —

True

True dictum

And this, which in plain language he thus specifies near the close of his book, is the very same thing, I would remark, with which he sets out in the beginning of it; only there varying the phrase, and adopting the lofty prophetic stile, as more suited to the grand ideas of his subject with which he was impressed, and which he was desirous to enforce, in the entrance of his work, upon the minds of his readers.

John i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* The term λογος, logos, which we render *Word*, might with equal justness, be translated, *reason*, *wisdom*. And this latter rendering of it is more suited to the apostle's intention. For it is the concurring sentiment of commentators, antient and modern, that St. John had in his eye, and took his idea and phrase from what is spoken of wisdom, in Prov. viii. "For my part," says Dr. Campbell, one of the last of them, summing up what had been observed upon the subject by very many others before him; "I intirely agree with those, who think it most likely, that the allusion here is to a portion of holy writ, viz. to Prov. viii. throughout. What is here termed, ο λογος, *the Word*, is there σοφια, *wisdom*." Note on John i. 1.

" You

“ You desire to know from me, says Vitringa (*k*), a learned german divine, of deserved reputation, what is the true meaning of the term, *logos*, in the preface of St. John’s gospel, as there are such various opinions of learned men concerning it? I do not take upon me to decide for others, but shall with all modesty deliver my own sentiment, without offence, I hope, as it is without censure of my friends, who may think differently from me. It is my opinion, that this term, *logos*, should be rendered, *reason*, or *the wisdom of God*: though I would have the phrase, *the word of God*, retained in the common version. Every one must see, in reading this prologue of St. John’s gospel, that he alludes throughout to the viiiith chap. of the Proverbs of Solomon: so that we ought to make choice of such a translation
of

(*k*) Quæris veram hujus nominis interpretationem, de qua variæ extant eruditorum hominum sententiæ. Non vindico mihi ejus rei arbitrium; tantum, quod hic sentio, modeste, salva dissentientium existimatione et amicitia, profero; verendum esse hoc nomen, *Ratio vel Sapientia Dei*: etsi receptam phrasim *Sermonis Dei*, in versione retinendam censuerim. Constat cuique, prologum evangelii legenti, alludere Joannem in toto illo prologo, ad caput octavum proverbiorum Solomonis; ut proinde talem eligere oporteat interpretationem, quæ affinis sit voci *Sapientiæ*. Vitringa in Apoc. cap. xix. ver. 13. p. 1109. This is the quotation in Lardner’s Supplement, Vol. I. p. 437; of which I have given a translation,

of the term, logos, as comes nearest to the word, *wisdom*."

The passage of Solomon, to which the apostle makes allusion, is; *Doth not Wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice! She standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the water should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.*

By *Wisdom*, in these words of Solomon, no jew, no reader of competent understanding, unless he had imbibed such an opinion beforehand, would conclude that a divine person, an intelligent agent, another God, different from the supreme Being, was intended: but would easily perceive, that Solomon chose this method of representing the divine attribute

attribute (*l*) of wisdom, as a queen, or a person of the highest dignity, that had been always with God, from the beginning, and present at the creation of the world, and afterwards as taking pleasure in attending to the concerns of mortals: to teach in that magnificent, animated style, peculiar to the sacred writings; that all things were originally made and are conducted by the most perfect wisdom of the Divine Being; and the affairs of men in particular governed by a most wise and kind providence.

Now in imitation of Solomon, and with acknowledged reference to him, St John, in his preface, introduces and describes *divine wisdom*, as a great personage, who had been from the first with God, nay, who was God; by whom all things had been made at first, and different advantages of light and knowledge afterwards communicated to the world, and especially to the Israelites; but who had

(*l*) It is a frequent mode of speaking of, and addressing the Divine Being, and source of all perfection, to denominate him by some one of his attributes:—

‘ Assist us, O thou power divine, with the light of that reason
‘ by which thou lightest the world, by which grace and beauty
‘ is diffused through every part, and the welfare of the
‘ whole is ever uniformly upheld!’

Harris’s Three Treatises, p. 229.

Eternal Wisdom, thee we praise,

Thee the creation sings:

With thy loud name, rocks, hills, and seas,

And heav’n’s high palace rings.

Watts’s Song to creating Wisdom;

had now bestowed on all other nations, equally with jews, the means of attaining eternal life: The apostle thus personifying the divine wisdom, that he might have an opportunity thereby to declare the fulness of it which dwelt in Jesus; or, in plainer words, as mentioned above, that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.

This, which will be farther illustrated, and proved to be the design of the evangelist, was soon obscured and lost among the learned christians, by the comments of false philosophy, and from their not being satisfied with the plain doctrine of the scripture concerning Christ: and through them, the whole christian world has been blinded with respect to his true character for 1600 years. But the genuine intention and meaning of the apostle would have stood a fairer chance for being recovered, in later times, by christians, especially since the Reformation, that the scriptures have been allowed to be translated into the mother-tongue of different countries, if the translators had kept more exactly to the original.

It would not have been taken, for instance, so immediately, and so as to exclude all farther inquiry and decision, that the term, *logos*, *word*, stood for Christ, and that Christ was God; if it had not been wrongly translated, as in our common version, ver. 2. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, &c;* but the words
had

had been rendered, *All things were made by it, and without it was not any thing made that was made, In it was life, &c:* Some of our english versions. that by Judd, in 1552, and that by Tomson in 1583, have attended to this construction in part, though they have not carried it throughout, as it ought to have been done.

Castellio or Chateillon, whom I named with honour in my former address to you, has strictly adhered to the apostle's language, in this passage, in his French translation of the bible, which I put below (*m*). And I question not his intending the same

(*m*) L'evangile selon St. Jehan. chap. i. Au commencement étoit la parolle, e la parolle étoit au commencement vers Dieu, e étoit la parolle Dieu, laquelle étoit au commencement vers Dieu. Tout a été fait par elle, e sans elle rien n' a été fait, qui ait été fait. En elle étoit vie, e la vie étoit la lumiere des hommes, e la lumiere luit es tenebres, e les tenebres ne l'ont pas comprinse. Il y eut un homme envoyé de Dieu, qui avoit nom Jehan, lequel vint pour témog-nage pour témogner de la lumiere. Il y avoit la vraye lumiere, qui illumine tout homme venant au monde. La ditte parolle étoit au monde, e le monde avoit été fait par elle, e le monde ne l'a pas conneue. Elle ét venue chés soi, e les siens ne l'ont pas receue. E tous ceux qui l'ont receue, elle leur a donné puissance d'être fait enfans de Dieu, aux croy-ans en son nom, lesquels ne sont pas engendrés de sang, ne de volonté de chair, ne de volonté d' homme, mais de Dieu. E la parolle a été faite chair, e a habité entre nous, pleine de grace e verité: e avons veu sa clarté, comme clarté du fils unique du pere.

Le Bible nouvellement translatée, par Sébastian Chateillon.

A Bale. MDLV.

same in his latin version, but the term, *sermo*, being there of the masculine gender, it is not so distinct and discernible.

The excellent Le Clerc, that accomplished scholar, first adventured to publish in latin, what I would call a just translation of this beginning of St. John's gospel. Only, instead of *sapientia*, *wisdom*, which I propose, he renders the term *λογος*, *ratio*, *reason*. But he very properly remarks, that *λογος*, *reason*, is the same with *σοφια*, *wisdom*, and that they are often put for each other.

It is more agreeable to our language, as well as more scriptural, to render the term, *λογος*, *wisdom*, rather than *reason*, and therefore I shall adopt it in the translation, which I am going to lay before you. And I trust, that you will thus find an easy sense of the whole passage, and in perfect agreement with the stile of the sacred writings, when considered in the light above represented, as a personification of Divine Wisdom, or a characterizing of the Divine Being by one of his attributes; and that you will thereby be guarded against that polytheism, which christians, full of heathen ideas, very early grafted upon it.

*A new translation, and paraphrase, of the Preface (n)
to St. John's gospel, with remarks.*

John i. 1. 2. 3. *In the beginning was Wisdom,
and Wisdom was with God, and (o) God was Wisdom.*
The

(n) Dr. Campbell, in his late translation of The four Gospels, intitles this Preface of St. John's gospel, THE INCARNATION. I am sorry that so learned a man should continue to give countenance to such gross, unscriptural language, which casts a mist over the meaning of the apostle. For it is apparent, and the Doctor himself owns it, in a note on ver. 14. that *σαρξ*, flesh, in this place, stands for a human being, man as mortal: the whole man, consisting of body and soul as we speak, and not merely the flesh, the body, the outward case. The word, *Incarnation*, therefore, which is in plain english, *the putting into flesh*, is most improper, as it is intirely without any just meaning.

This respectable writer falls into the same mistake, in rendering ver. 14. thus; And the word became *incarnate*. If he had adhered to his own just interpretation of the term, *σαρξ*, flesh, he should have translated it, *And the word became a human being*, a mortal man; which is the proper rendering. *Incarnation* and *Incarnate*, are terms that should be avoided, by all who wish to give the true sense of the sacred writer, and to speak so as to be understood.

Tyndal.

(o) "The old english translation, authorized by Henry viii, following the arrangement used in the original, says, *God was the word*. In this manner, Luther also, in his german translation, renders it, *Gort was das wort*." Campbell on John i. 1.

The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it was nothing made.

Paraphrase. Wisdom was before all things; for wisdom was always with God, yea Wisdom was God himself. It was with him before the creation of the world, for every thing was brought into existence by the most perfect wisdom, and there are evident marks of it in every thing that was made.

Remark 1. The sacred writer explains himself, lest any should mistake him, that by Wisdom he intended God himself, whose attribute it was; and not, another God.

Rem. 2. The construction here given is not a mere tautology, as some have represented it, as if it amounted to nothing more than saying, in a circuitous manner, that God was a very wise being. For it is always of importance for grave respectable writers, particularly acquainted with the ways of God, to assert that they are all the result of wisdom. But there was a peculiar propriety, and beauty, in the apostle introducing Wisdom, (the wisdom of God) as a Divine Person, creating and governing all things; that he might in a more forcible way inform his readers of what they could not of themselves know, and of what he could bear testimony, that this wisdom was in the highest degree imparted to Jesus Christ.

Rem. 3. It still discovers more the judgment of St. John, in making such a proem to his history of

Christ, and in so strongly insisting on the sole creative power of God, by his wisdom, *i. e.* by himself alone; if it be true, as has been the sentiment of many judicious persons, that he had respect to a gross, wide spreading, and plausible error; which in very early times took place among learned christians; *viz.* that the world was so imperfect, and abounding with evil, that it was not the work of the supreme being, whom they believed to be perfectly good; but of a power inferior to him. For this the reader may consult what Dr. Lardner cites from Beausobre, in his history of Heretics, page 78; and still more, many passages in Dr. Priestley's admirable work, the history of early opinions concerning Christ, and in his Letters to Dr. Horsley.

Rem. 4. If we were not possessed of such satisfactory proof, that our evangelist here treats, not of Christ, but of the logos, the Word, the Wisdom of God, which is himself; there would nevertheless be a presumption, and objection, against the common interpretation, and his intending here to describe Jesus, as God equal to the supreme, that could never be surmounted. For it is out of the line of all probability, that the apostle John, a jew, a man of piety and of a sound mind, who held Jehovah, their God, to be God alone, and no other besides HIM; that he, should begin his history of his master Jesus, the Christ, *i. e.* their expected

expected great prophet, one descended from a particular tribe and family of their nation, with declaring *him* to be God. Moreover, such a declaration would have been a direct breach of the law of God, given by Moses; and by that law, Deut. xiii. 10. the apostle would have been liable to have been stoned to death, for delivering and preaching such a doctrine. Our Lord's adversaries indeed, in their rage, John x. 13. accused him of forming such pretensions; because ver. 30. he had said, *I and the Father are one*; though it was only in a sense similar to that, in which he afterwards said, John xvii. 21. 22. that his disciples *were one with him and with the Father*. But he, with great humility, instantly disclaimed every thing of the kind, ver. 34. 35. 36. alleging, that he took nothing more upon him than belonged to his character and authority from God, as the Messiah: owning however, at the same time, that it would have been blasphemy in him, if he had pretended to be the supreme God.

Ver. 4. 5. *In it was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.*

Paraphrase. With the Divine Wisdom heretofore was lodged that great and peculiar blessing and privilege of the gospel, the knowledge of the way to eternal life; and this knowledge was, and was intended to be a sufficient light to guide men

to it. But although this light has for some time shone forth upon the earth, many chuse rather to walk in the darkness of ignorance, than to make the proper use of it.

Remark. The sacred writer refers to the reception which the gospel had hitherto met with in the world, particularly among his countrymen; in figurative expressions, of easy comprehension, and familiar to the jews. Christ often calls himself the light; especially that which was to conduct mankind to eternal life. John viii. 12. xi. 25, xii. 46.

Having noted this in general, he proceeds to specify more particularly, by whose immediate instrumentality, Divine Wisdom made the first opening, and discovery of this light of eternal life to the world.

Ver. 6. 7. 8. 9. *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which came into the world, and enlighteneth every man.*

Paraphrase. John, the son of Zachariah, had a divine commission, to testify and declare, that God was about to make the last and most perfect revelation of his will to the world. But though an extraordinary prophet, he was not the person
by

by whom this revelation was to be made; his office being only to persuade men, by immediate repentance and a sincere reformation, to fit themselves to receive it. That person had a much higher office and dignity than John, in that he was honoured with being made the instrument of bringing, not jews only, but all mankind to eternal life.

The evangelist, having thus in a brief digression, touched upon the distinct provinces of Christ and of John the Baptist, his fore-runner; proceeds with the subject he was upon, which was the reception the gospel had met with in the world.

Ver. 10. 11. 12. 13. *It (Divine Wisdom) was in the world, and the world was made by it, and the world knew it not. It came to it's own land, and it's own people received it not. But as many as received it, to them it gave power, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on it's name. Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Paraphrase. Divine Wisdom was for a while among men, i.e. in the person of Christ; as he soon after explains himself: But though it had given them their being, their prejudices and evil passions made them pay no regard to it. Even the people of the jews, who had been distinguished by it with such signal favours, and now had the blessing of the gospel first communicated to them,

did not attend to it as became them. Nevertheless, on those who did listen to it's instructions, of whatever nation, country, or family, jews or gentiles, it bestowed the privilege of becoming the children of God, and heirs of eternal life.

Rem. 1. The evangelist here plainly intimates, that the gospel had been now, for some time, preached to jews, and gentiles, and received by some among both; by the latter especially, in greater numbers.

Rem. 2. When Wisdom, or God, whose attribute it is, is said to be in the world, and to come to men, the jews never took this language in the gross literal sense, as if God in person had come to them. But they readily understood it(*p*), as signifying, that the Divine Being had vouchsafed to manifest his will and designs to them, by some prophet raised up by him; or had afforded them assistance and protection by some extraordinary interposition in their behalf.

Rem. 3. It is from a gross conception, and mistake of the kind just now noted, that some christians in our own days, crudely maintain, that there

(*p*) *Isaiah xlv. 2.* *Jehovah, God, says, that he will go before Cyrus, make the mountains level before him, &c.*—Not God in person: but it is a prophetic description of the Divine Providence that would attend that prince, and prosper his expedition against Babylon.

there is no God but Jesus, meaning the divinity in him: not considering, that Jesus's divinity consisted only in the communication of divine powers to him; and that if it pleased the Almighty, others might in that sense be equally gods as Jesus was, *i. e.* by a communication of the same divine powers.

The evangelist now approaches to the point he had in view from the first; and on account of which he had been induced to adopt the lofty figurative manner of Solomon, in his description of the Divine Being; namely, to declare thereby the fulness of the divine wisdom, which was communicated to Jesus; in other words, that he was the Christ, the anointed of God.

Ver. 14. *And Wisdom became man, and dwelt among us, and we beheld it's glory, the glory as of the well-beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth (q).*

Paraphrase

(q) If that early corruption of the true doctrine concerning Christ, had appeared, when John wrote his gospel, which he particularly writes against in his first and second epistles, *viz.* That our Saviour was not *flesh*, not really a mortal suffering man, but one in appearance only; our evangelist might have a view to this here, in his preface to his gospel, to condemn it, where he says; *Wisdom became flesh*, became a human being, *i. e.* the Divine Wisdom dwelled in the man Christ Jesus; was in a high degree communicated to him. This will be exactly similar to what he asserts in his epistles, that Jesus Christ *came in flesh*; *i. e.* that he was a human being, a mortal man, divinely inspired and commissioned.

Paraphrase. That *Wisdom*, concludes the apostle, which I have spoken of, and have asserted to have been with God from the beginning, yea to have been God himself, became conspicuous in the man Christ Jesus, and in him sojourned for a time among us, mild and gracious; and we, his apostles, beheld in him the evident tokens of this wisdom, in that knowledge of the divine will and designs which appeared in him, and in those miraculous powers with which he was invested, and which bespoke him the highly favoured and well-beloved Son of God.

COROLLARIES, and ILLUSTRATIONS of the foregoing interpretation of John i. 1.—14.

I.

Dr. Doddridge, in his *Harmony*, places before Christ's birth, this preface of St. John's gospel; which he, without scruple, pronounces to be 'a very sublime and emphatical account of the deity and incarnation of Christ;' and by this positive assertion without proof, greatly misleads his numerous readers, who trust him. For you have seen it proved, I hope, by satisfactory evidence, to be only a description of the Divine Being himself, by his character or attribute of wisdom, after the manner of Solomon, *Proverbs* viii. which the apostle made choice of, in opening his history, the
more

more easily and naturally to teach, that the Divine Wisdom dwelt in or was most abundantly communicated to the holy Jesus.

The judicious Le Clerc, on the other hand, in his Harmony of the gospels, with great propriety, introduces this preface, at Christ's entry on his public ministry, when the spirit descended (Matt. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 32.) upon him; or when the Divine Wisdom here spoken of, entered into or was imparted to him, and the gifts of a divine wisdom and power were conferred upon him to qualify him for the important part he was to act, and enable him to give proof of his mission from God.

II.

It gives additional force and sanction to the interpretation above assigned, that the *λογος*, the *Word*, is by no means a name of Christ, denoting him a great preexistent spirit, and subordinate creator of all things; because the evangelist throughout his gospel never after gives him that name, nor speaks of him as such a great being, or as exerting any powers more than belonged to ordinary men. Had he been such a mighty preexistent Being, the Eternal himself, or next to the Eternal, he could not be supposed to be without powers of his own: whereas our apostle represents the holy Jesus uniformly ascribing to God, whatever extraordinary wisdom was in him, as also the works,

or

or miracles that were wrought by him. He had no supernatural power, no divinity of his own, if we may so speak; but only that of the Father dwelling in him, and assisting his feeble human power.

III.

It having been maintained by some, in support of their notion, that the *logos*, the *Word*, stands for Christ; that though the apostle John never after gives Christ that name in his gospel, he ascribes it to him in his other writings; I shall propose to your consideration the two principal passages that are brought in proof of this opinion. And the first of these is 1 John i. 1. 2. 3.

The beginning of this first epistle of St. John is obscure, as the writer breaks abruptly into his subject, which he was very earnest about, without stating what it was. But as he had no thought of writing for us, at this distance of time, but directed himself to persons of his acquaintance, and to whose circumstances what he says was particularly adapted, they would readily comprehend what he meant, from the slightest hint. It appears however, in reading over his epistle, that great errors had crept in among those to whom he addressed it; and particularly that some among them, through a mistaken zeal, and design to do honour to our Saviour, denied that he had been a mortal

mortal man, liable to suffering like the rest of us (r). These Christians our apostle censures very sharply, iv. 1. 2. 3. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false teachers, pretending to have a divine authority, are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come into the world, and even now already is in the world.* He repeats the same in his second epistle, i. 7. *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist.* Our apostle, here declares, that every one who takes upon him to teach the doctrine of the spirit of God, *i. e.* the true christian doctrine, and does not hold and teach the blessed Jesus to have been a mortal man, is in a grievous error, is deceived himself, and deceives

(r) "It is well known, that in the early days of christianity, particularly in Asia, where St. John resided, there arose people, generally called, Docetes, who denied the real humanity of Christ, and said he was man in appearance only. These St. John opposeth in his epistles, if not in his gospel also. Against them he here asserts, that Jesus had the innocent infirmities of the human nature, and that he really suffered and died." Lardner on the Logos, p. 8.

deceives others. And you cannot but perceive, that it is the very same doctrine, of the proper humanity of Christ, which he insists upon and asserts with so much warmth in the beginning of his epistle.

There having then risen up among those, to whom our apostle writes, certain persons who denied Jesus Christ to have been really a man, and to have suffered and died; he begins his letter to them, by asserting, with vehemence, and an authority that became him, the contrary of such a vain doctrine, from his own experience, as well as of others of the apostles, who had lived and conversed with Christ;

(s) *We publish unto you*, says he, *concerning the word (t) of life (u)*, HIM, *who was from the beginning*;

(s) See Beaufobre and L'Enfant's version. This order in the rendering of the words is every natural and just.

(t) *The word of life*] i. e. the doctrine of eternal life, the gospel. Not the *Word*, absolutely, as a name of Christ; but the word of life: It may also, by a figure of speech, most common with our Lord and the writers of the New Testament, signify Christ himself as being the author of the gospel, of eternal life. In which acceptation, the words would be thus rendered,—We publish unto you, concerning the author of the gospel, or of the doctrine of eternal life, him, whom we were acquainted with from the first preaching of it, &c. Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase of *from the beginning*, is, from the beginning of the gospel declaration.

(u) HIM] You will judge how far this is a just translation, from these two considerations: 1. That it is not a thing, but

ning (w); whom we have heard; whom we have seen with our eyes; whom we have looked upon, and our hands have handled: For the life was manifested, and we have (x) seen it, and bear witness, and

but a person, that the sacred writer is speaking of; whom he describes as the object of his senses, and a human being with whom he had lived and conversed. 2. It is usual with Christ, and the writers of the New Testament, frequently to speak of things as persons. Matth. xviii. 2. *The son of man came to save, το απολωλος*, that which was lost; rather, *those who were lost*. John vi. 37. *Every thing that the Father hath given me, will come unto me.* ver. 39. *This is the will of the Father, that of every thing he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but I will raise it up at the last day.* Thing here for person. See Dr. Hammond on Colossians, i. 20. and a most valuable small Tract, in Commentaries and Essays printed by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures, intitled, “On the creation of all things by Jesus Christ.”

(w) *From the beginning*] *απ' αρχης*, i. e. from the beginning of the gospel; of Christ's public ministry; when he began to be personally known to his disciples. This phrase, *απ' αρχης*, is again used by our apostle, a little lower, ii. 7. where it evidently signifies the first preaching of the gospel. See also, ver. 13. 14. 24. iii. 11. 2 John, 5. See also particularly John xv. 27. where it is precisely so used by our Lord himself. This is that which St. Mark styles, i. 1. *Αρχη του ευαγγελιου*, &c. *the beginning of the gospel*. It is a different phrase that our apostle uses in the entrance of his gospel, *αρχη ην ο λογος*, &c. *In the beginning*, &c. The same which is used, Genesis, i. 1. *αρχη αλ*.

(x) *We have seen it*] i. e. Christ, the author of it.

and shew unto you that eternal life, (y) which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. HIM, whom we have seen and heard, publish we unto you, 1 John i. 1. 2. 3.

2. The other passage where St. John is supposed to speak of the λογος, or *Word*, as a name by which Christ went, is, Rev. xix. 13. where in an emblematic description of Christ, it is said, *he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood: and his name is called the Word of God.*

But the phrase, *his name is called*; as above shewn, p. 12. signifies no more than, he shall deserve to be called, it will be a name suited to his character. And unless St John intended to give him this appellation in these two passages now considered, the contrary of which I hope I may say, has been proved, it is certain, that none of the other apostles, or evangelists, ever so stile him. Which could scarcely have happened, if it was a name familiarly ascribed to him. Not to say, that *the Word of God* is very different from *The Word*, and is not properly a name, but a paraphrastic description of the person to whom it is applied, as the revealer, the publisher of the will and commands of God.

Not only those christians who have held Christ to be God equal with the Father, have supposed him

(y) *Which was with the Father*] The knowledge of eternal life was unknown, hidden in the divine councils, till Christ was commissioned to reveal it.

him to be the *logos*, the *Word*, spoken of in this preface to St. John's gospel: but that famous, and excellent person, *F. Socinus*, giving quite a new turn to this passage, even he maintained Christ to be the *logos*, the *Word*, though he looked upon him in no higher a light than as the son of Mary, and one of the human race, with extraordinary endowments of wisdom and power from heaven. The title of God, he reckoned to be given to him, in an inferior, figurative sense, as Moses, *Exod. vii. 1.* is said to be *a God unto Pharaoh*. And what is spoken of *all things being made by him*, he interpreted, not concerning the first creation out of nothing, but of a *new creation*, and reformation of the world by the doctrine of the gospel. *Socin. op. vol. i. p. 79.* Toulmin's *Life of Christ*, p. 368.

If such an interpretation should be found to be more consistent, and in greater agreement with the sacred writings, than that which has been now assigned, it would deserve to be admitted. But to name no other, there is one objection of vast weight, which lies against it, and I know not how it can ever be removed; namely, that it is out of all probability, that the apostle John, who confessedly held his master to be a human creature, that he should preface his history of him with declaring him to be God, without reserve, in a most solemn manner. And although it may be

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alleged,

alleged, that he is so stiled in an inferior less proper sense; yet this does not appear. It is besides most improbable, that he should here call Christ, God, when he never after gives him that title throughout his book, or describes it as assumed by our lord; nor is it ever ascribed to him by any other of the sacred writers. Men that had been originally heathens might make so free, and be so familiar with the name of God, as we find done by the interpolater of Ignatius's Epistles; but not St. John, a jew-born.

V.

The apostle John, in this preface to his gospel, teaches not, that Jesus was the most high God, or a great preexistent spirit, and subordinate creator of the world; or that he was God in any sense whatsoever: but that he was a mortal man, raised up for the greatest purposes, and filled with wisdom and divine power, to fit him for the execution of the important office and trust delegated to him. And what the apostle here says, that *Wisdom*, the Divine Wisdom *became flesh*, or rather a mortal man, in the person of Jesus Christ, is in reality nothing more than the apostle afterwards intimates, as spoken in other words, by our lord himself. John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* xii. 45. 49. 50. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment,*
what

what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. xiv. 10. 11. Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father who dwelleth in me, he doth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. John the Baptist saith, John iii. 34. For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. What is all this, but saying, that the Divine Wisdom was imparted to Jesus, and dwelt in him? Of the same signification is that language of St. Paul in his epistles, 2 Cor. v. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Coloss. i. 19. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, ii. 9. For in him dwelleth all (x) the fulness of the deity bodily.

Somewhat of a like kind, but in a lower degree is predicated of the followers of Christ, in that first age of our religion. Eph. iii. 19. That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them.

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1 Cor.

(x) Whatever is to be understood by this expression, you see the same used, Eph. iii. 19, of the true followers of Christ.

1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

So that we may hence infer, that in an inferior limited sense, *Wisdom became flesh* or man, in the apostles of Christ, and in the first christians; upon each of whom extraordinary divine gifts were bestowed. This however is only mentioned to take off that air of mystery, which has been thrown over this language concerning the Divine Wisdom in Christ: from which strange conclusions have been made, and the worship of the one true God the Father defaced, and nearly lost among men.

VI.

We find that Erasmus was greatly blamed by some Divines, for translating the first verse of St. John's gospel; *In the beginning was—sermo, speech*, instead of *verbum, word*. But many of the latin fathers had so rendered the term, *λογος*, before him. It is of small consequence how it be rendered, so that it does not stand for Christ, as God and creator of all things; a construction most contrary to the intention of the apostle, and in opposition to the whole tenor of the scriptures. There would be nothing wrong in still continuing to translate, *In the beginning was the Word*; if thereby be understood, not Christ, but the divine power and energy, by which all things were made, by which Christ was inspired and directed. But in the translations in our own tongue, it would be better

better no longer to say, *In the beginning was the word*, but rather *wisdom*: because all english readers have so long been wont to associate the term, *the Word*, with Christ as God, that they will be in danger of still thinking Christ in that character to be meant by it, and not the Divine Wisdom or Power, which is God himself.

VII.

This very gross and fatal mistake, of making the *λογος*, the word, in the beginning of St. John's gospel, not to be an attribute of God, the divine wisdom, power, &c; but a real person distinct from God, and the proper name of Christ, as a Being next or equal to God himself; has mislead for ages, and still misleads the christian world in general. This you find in all writings of Divines, antient and modern. Look into commentaries, annotations upon the scriptures; consult Lexicons, Dictionaries, and immediately you find, *λογος*, *logos*, *the word*, interpreted universally, *a name of Christ*, *the substantial word*, *the second person of the Trinity*, &c. laying down this interpretation, and definition of the term, as a matter absolutely fixed, and thus throwing a wrong bias on the minds of young scholars and heedless readers. But do you, who I trust are now better informed, tell to every one that comes in your way, to inquire and judge for themselves, and not to be imposed upon by

the pretended authority of Divines, or books of the learned: Tell them, that they will find that the three former evangelists knew nothing of the blessed Jesus being any other than a human being, and that therefore St. John's meaning is likely to be misunderstood by those who would make him any other; and that the term, *logos*, the *Word*, *Wisdom*, or whatever construction be put upon it, cannot be a name of Christ, as a Divine Person, God, and creator of all things: but is the name and attribute of the Great God himself; his wisdom, his word, or divine energy, by which he brought all things into being, and directs and governs them; which word or wisdom was in an extraordinary degree imparted to Jesus Christ, so that it might be said to dwell in him,

VIII.

There are grounds to believe that this interpretation of the beginning of St. John's gospel, which I trust may be said now to have been confirmed by a variety of arguments, was, from the first and for several centuries, held by those christians, who formed their opinions of their religion, from scripture, and not from philosophy. But their books, or any just accounts of the men, have not been suffered to come down to us. We should in all probability never have heard of the sentiments of Marcellus, the unitarian bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, in the 4th century, if Eusebius had

had not been excited (a) to write against him, on account of his charging himself, and some

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bishops

(a) Eusebius, being a great bishop, and having the secular power on his side, is very angry, and abusive; accuses Marcellus of judaism, and sabellianism, which in those days were but other words for unitarianism; and though a person of great learning and fine parts, he follows the vogue and prejudice of the times, and quotes scripture by rote without attending to what the sacred writer intended by it. The following is a sample of his manner in controversy, from the beginning of his second book against Marcellus.

‘ Having now,’ says Eusebius, ‘ sufficiently exposed this Galatian’s calumnies, (so he stiles Marcellus in contempt) it is time to drag to light his faith, or rather his infidelity (πιστις η και πολλοι απιστιαν) towards the Son of God; that I may strip the man’s impious opinions of that plausible covering under which they have long been masked, and let all the world see, by his own testimony, who and what sort of man he is, who has so long presided in the church. For he makes no scruple in asserting, “ that Christ was not the son of God, nor had any existence, before he was born of the virgin Mary;” maintaining, *μητις οναι, μητις προϋφισται, μητις ολως ποτε υιος υπαρχει τω θεω, προ τε τεχθηναι δια της παρθενου, δοξαζων. Αυτον δε μονον ειναι λογον φασκων, συμφυα τω θεω, αιδιως αυτω συνοηα και ηνωμενον, οιος αν ειη και ο εν ανθρωπω λογος. τειν γαρ αυτον χρηται τω παραδειγματι. i. e. “ that the Son was not, nor ever preexisted in any sort, nor was with God, before he was born of the virgin Mary. And that the logos, the word, is nothing but an attribute of the Deity, coexisting, with and united to him, from all eternity, and the same in God, that reason is in man :”* for he makes use of this very comparison. Euseb. Op. Colon. 1688, contra Marcell. p. 31. 32.

bishops, and other persons, with not holding one God only, but two Gods : a first, unborn, without beginning ; a second God, as he objects to them, who was younger and inferior ; and imputing this very justly to them, for making Christ, the *logos*, the word, mentioned by St. John, an inferior God, and creator, under the supreme. But Marcellus himself, as will farther appear, maintained, that the *logos*, the word, was only an attribute of God, his power and energy, which was sometimes for a while communicated to his creatures, and then withdrawn, and that it was the same in God, as reason in man,

SECTION VI.

Of the other passages in St. John's gospel, which are supposed to prove Christ to have existed in a former state.

The preface of St. John's gospel, which has been shewn to have been very erroneously produced as a proof of the divinity and preexistence of Christ, contains only the *words* and a remark of *John* himself. The other *supposed* proofs of Christ's divinity in our evangelist, which we proceed to examine, are taken from *his own words*; the first

first and the last only excepted. But before I lead you into a consideration of them, I would remind you, of what cannot escape the attentive reader of the gospel history, *viz.* that our Lord generally expresses himself in figurative (*b*) language, peculiar to those eastern countries, and to the prophetic character. This is however more observable in our evangelist, than in the others; because he records several of Christ's longer discourses omitted by them; and those especially which he held with such of the common people, who had wordly views in attending him, and with the rulers of the country, who were exasperated against him for his self-denying doctrine, and bold reproof of their vices: and to both of them, for reasons well known and generally allowed, he was obliged to be on the reserve in declaring himself the messiah, their heavenly prophet, and king, in so many words; and therefore he made use of circumlocutions, and metaphorical expressions; calling himself *the bread of life*, and saying, that he *came down from heaven*, that he

was

(*b*) The truly learned Bishop Pearce, at the end of his commentary on St. Matthew's gospel, in a list of remarkable things, which he reckons up in it, inserts the following, *viz.* 'That almost every where he (Matthew) makes Jesus express himself in a figurative style; which was the eastern manner.' If he had thought proper to have mentioned it, he would have said, that this circumstance was still more remarkable in St. John,

was *the light of the world*; and *so on*. Taking this key along with you, there will be no great difficulty in coming at our Lord's meaning, in any of the language which he uses concerning himself.

SECTION VII.

Of the testimony of John the Baptist to Christ.

John 1. 15. *He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.* The last clause of this sentence should not have been put in ambiguous terms, to induce the mere english reader to interpret it, as if the baptist had said, that Jesus, though somewhat younger than him, was nevertheless before him in time; intending thereby to denote a prior eternal existence, which some would give him. A circumstance of this very extraordinary kind, if true, would not have been once only conveyed in a doubtful phrase, but frequently and explicitly mentioned. We may assure ourselves then, that the baptist speaks only of the dignity of Christ, and the superior importance of his message from God, that he was *before him* in that respect. And therefore it should be rendered into english, *for he was greater than me.* This is the sense of the words given by Dr. Clarke in his paraphrase; and it is acknowledged by the best critics to be a just translation of them. See Glassius. Philol. Sacr.

Sacr. p. 274. Dr. Campbell (c) understands the words to imply priority of time, that Christ existed before John; but then he refers it not to the person of Jesus, but to the *λογος*, the word, the wisdom of God, dwelling in him: a sense in which they may be taken, as L'Enfant before him observed, but who adopts the interpretation here given.

SECTION VIII.

Of the passages in St. John's gospel, containing those words of Christ himself, which are supposed to prove his having existed in a former state.

John iii. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.* You will find by examples produced both from profane and sacred authors, that to *ascend up to heaven*, signifies to

(c) The passage, thus explained, yields a sense which is both just and apposite, there being at least an apparent reference to the information the evangelist had given us concerning the *λογος*, *the word, or wisdom*, in the beginning of the chapter." Campbell in loc. This is an interpretation to which an unitarian could make no objection, though the other more probably was intended by St. John.

L'Enfant's translation of the verse is; C'est ici celui, duquel j'ai dit; celui qui vient apres moi, m'est préfér , parcequ'il est plus grand que moi.

to be admitted into an extraordinary knowlege of the divine councils. I would particularly refer you to Raphelius the son, in his preface to his father's annotations on the scriptures, because he was an excellent critic, of good sense, and also a person who believed the divinity of Christ, though he could not find it here. And there you will see, that it was the sentiment of learned and judicious christians, as well his own, that our Saviour's intent in this passage, was to say; that no other of the human race, no prophet before him, was acquainted with the whole will of God for the salvation of the world, but himself.

But there is a difficulty notwithstanding made by some, about the *coming down from heaven*, as if it implied Christ's having before his birth, lived in heaven, and that he literally came down from thence. This however has arisen from an unwillingness in the same learned men, to lose what they had long been accustomed to look upon as an argument of Christ having lived in heaven before he was born here; which prevented their examining and seeing, that *coming down from heaven* is equally figurative language with *ascending up to heaven*, and is in other places used by our saviour to signify his having a divine commission from heaven, or from God. This will by and by be proved in various instances.

The

The remaining clause of the sentence, *even the Son of man, who is in heaven*; if it be not (d) an interpolation of some officious transcriber, cannot be taken literally. For the *Son of man* could not be in heaven, at the same time that he was upon earth. It is therefore by judicious commentators considered in the same light as John i. 18, *who is in the bosom of the Father*; as metaphorical language, in which our Lord loved to express himself: and both of them to signify, the being admitted into the secret councils of God.

Matth. xi. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and [no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.]*

Justin Martyr cites the words within crotchets, as our Lord's censure of the jews for their ignorance of him as their delegated God, who spoke to Moses, &c. acting under the ineffable God, and father of the universe. Apolog. i. p. 81. (e).

The

(d) It is wanting in two antient MSS. also in the Æthiopic version; and in Gregory Nazianzen, a writer of the 4th century.

(e) Eusebius Hist. Eccles. p. 4. after citing Isa. liii. 8. and rendering it, *who shall declare his generation?* as a proof of Christ's divinity; adds this passage of Math. xi. 27. as a similar declaration of Christ concerning himself. But his interpretation will be found in both cases to be equally the language of imagination and prejudice, without due inquiry.

The passage is also produced by late writers, as teaching, that Christ is God equal to the Father, in all respects. It's true meaning can only be determined, by examining what our Saviour intended on the occasion, and what his words would convey in the connection in which he uttered them, to those that heard him.

Immediately before, upon reflection on the different behaviour of men towards him; the cool indifference *ver. 20.* of some, the malignant opposition *ver. 19.* of others, and the ardent zeal *ver. 12.* of many of the common people; you find our Lord breaking forth before his disciples into this devout ejaculation: *At that time Jesus answered and said; I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that having hid these things from learned and politic men, thou has revealed them unto babes. Even so, O Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight.* As though he had said in other words; "O thou kind author of my being and all it's blessings, and supreme lord of all; I acknowledge it to be a method of thy moral government, worthy of thine infinite wisdom and impartial goodness; that whilst the false maxims of the world, and the influence of irregular passions, blind the eyes of the learned and politically wise, that they cannot see thy heavenly truth which I teach them, it is gladly received by humble and inquiring minds, though of low worldly estimate."

Turning

Turning himself then to those that were with him, he proceeds to say, not boasting of himself, but properly asserting his divine commission, as the Messiah; *All things have been delivered*, or taught me of my Father; *i. e.* all things relating to the gospel and the final salvation of mankind; for the plain construction of the passage confines the general term to that sense.

And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; *i. e.* no one was acquainted with what he himself was to do and to suffer, and the happy consequences of it, but God who had determined every thing before hand.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him: *i. e.* Christ alone was favoured and commissioned by the Almighty, to instruct men in the knowledge of his will, and of the way to eternal life.

Here, you perceive, (*f*) is no rebuke of the jews, for any ignorance of Christ's *person*; no mysterious doctrine concerning *it*, as a thing known only to God and comprehensible by him; no intimation

(*f*) Hardy, in his N. T. briefly and well expresses the sense of the passage. *Nemo cognoscere possit, sc. proprio Marte, aut Patris consilia, qua ratione homines servari velit, nisi Filius; aut filii officium, cujus causa venit, nisi Pater. i. e.* "No one, by his own power, could know the design of the Father, by what method mankind were to be saved, but the Son; nor any one discover the office and duty of the Son, on what errand he came, but the Father."

mation of any omniscience of the Son equal to that of the Father, which some people imagine they find here. But the only knowlege spoken of, is that of the gospel; the discovery of the divine everlasting designs of mercy and goodness for the whole human race, which was given by the Almighty to Christ, to be communicated to the world.

SECTION IX.

The phrases, *coming down from heaven, being sent from God, sent into the world, coming into the world, coming forth from the Father, proceeding forth, and coming from God*; when used of himself by Christ, in St. John's gospel, signify his having a divine commission, the being an extraordinary divine prophet or messenger.

There is no language more imposing than this, upon readers of all degrees, who do not search and study the scriptures for themselves; rivetting in them so fast the notion of Christ having lived in another world before he came into this, that it is rarely to be eradicated afterwards by the strongest evidence to the contrary. But to you, that are coming into life, and whose prejudices are less fixed, I hope to make it clear and plain, and by our Saviour's own interpretation, that these forms of speech, however they appear to sound to the contrary, afford no proof of his having been in
heaven,

heaven, or having had any existence before that which he received at his birth in Judea.

1. Christ's *coming down from heaven*, and being *sent from God*, which are equivalent expressions, signify only his being invested with a divine commission:

John vi. 33. Jesus saith, *The bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*; styling his doctrine which taught men the way to eternal life, *bread coming down from heaven*, because he taught it by an authority from heaven, *i. e.* from God. In the same way of speaking, at another time, he says, Matt. xxi. 25. that the baptism of John *came from heaven*, because it was of divine authority. So that a doctrine is said to come down from heaven; when taught by a person who has a divine commission.

Soon after, John vi. 38. our Lords adds, *I came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, but the will of him *that sent me*; where he expounds his own coming down from heaven; to signify nothing more than his being sent from God; the latter part of the sentence being evidently synonymous with or explanatory of the former.

But the being *sent from God* signifies only the being a prophet, or divine messenger. For it is

said

said of John the Baptist, John i. 6, that he was a man *sent from God*.

Therefore the language, *coming down from heaven*, signifying the same as being *sent from God*, it might, from such language, equally be concluded that John the Baptist had a prior existence in another world, as that our Saviour existed in heaven, before he was born of his mother Mary. The fact is; it only proves concerning both, that they had an extraordinary commission from God, were divine prophets or messengers.

2. Christ's being *sent into the world*, signifies his having a divine commission, as a prophet or teacher.

In his prayer to God, not long before his death, which has been preserved by St. John, our Lord thus expresses himself to the heavenly Father, and author of his being, concerning his chosen disciples; John xvii. 18. As thou hast *sent me into the world*, even so have I also *sent them into the world*. In which words he cannot be said to assert, that he had existed in another world before he came into this; because in that case, it would be applicable to his disciples, concerning whom he uses the same language, that they had existed in another world: which is not to be supposed.

What our divine master really intended respecting them and himself, was, suitably and agreeably to the solemn occasion, and to his own situation
and

and character; to express before the sovereign disposer of himself and all things, his attention to the important trust that had been committed to him, in providing for the propagation of the truth after his own departure out of the world, which was soon to take place; and as he himself had been sent into the world, *i. e.* had a special commission and appointment from the heavenly Father to teach mankind, he had, by his divine (Luke vi. 12. 13. Acts i. 2.) direction, sent into the world, *i. e.* appointed, and given these men his disciples a commission to succeed him in his office; and he now intreated the divine blessing upon them.

The expression therefore of Christ's being *sent into the world*, had no reference to any prior state of existence, but was purely declaratory in other words, of his having an extraordinary commission from God, as a prophet, or teacher of his will and commands. And as we saw under the last head, that his *coming down from heaven*, *i. e.* from God, and his being *sent into the world*, were phrases precisely of the same import; so, may we conclude, are, *his coming into the world* and *being sent into the world*.

3. *Proceeding forth and coming from God, and coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world*, are used by our Lord, to express his extraordinary commission from God, his being the

Christ, the Messiah. John viii. 42. *Jesus said unto them; I proceeded forth, ἐξελθὼν, and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* Our Lord here explains the terms he uses; viz. that by *proceeding forth*, and *coming from God*, he intended his being *sent by him*, which signifies his having an especial divine commission.

John xvi. 28. *I came forth, ἐξελθὼν, or I proceeded forth from the Father, and am come into the world.* Now, in the former of these citations, we saw that *proceeding forth from God*, signified only the having an extraordinary commission from him, therefore the same is the meaning of the like expressions here used by our Lord.

It follows therefore demonstrably, by our Saviour's own exposition, that *coming down from heaven, being sent from God, being sent into the world, proceeding forth and coming from God, coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world, are all different expressions, of one and the same thing; and do not refer to, or signify, any prior state or condition of being, which Christ enjoyed before he was born, but denote only the having an extraordinary commission from God to teach his will to mankind.*

You may perhaps be somewhat disturbed, that our Saviour, in speaking concerning himself, should use such ambiguous terms, and liable to mislead,

if

if taken in their literal meaning. But his countrymen, the jews, to whom he delivered himself, would be under no such embarrassment; and he must speak to them in their own way, to make proper impressions on them: he could not do otherwise. When it was said among them, that any man *came from heaven*, from God, they naturally and immediately understood it of coming as a prophet, with a divine commission or message. Christians indeed, who come to the reading of the scriptures, already persuaded, from the authority of their creeds and confessions of faith made by their priests, that Christ is God, or a great pre-existent spirit, instantly apply such language, without thought or examination, to confirm them in their prejudices. But if they would have the patience themselves to consult the sacred writings, what they teach; and particularly, in the present instance, to let our Lord interpret his own words, these great errors concerning him, making him a different being from what he really is, might have been prevented; and it is in this way only that they can be rectified.

John vi. 62. *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before!* These words, literally taken, contain not any absolute declaration that Christ existed in a former state, but that he had formerly been in heaven, and was to go thither again; which thing it is possible and

competent for a human creature to do, if it so please the Divine Being. And some christians have concluded hence, and from other passages of scripture, that this was the fact, and that our Lord, a short time before he entered on his public ministry, had been taken up into heaven to be instructed in the divine will and councils, which he was to communicate to the world; as St. Paul represents himself caught up to the *third heaven*; 2 Cor. xii. 2. But had this been the case with respect to Christ, it may be presumed, that we should have had more express information of it.

Grotius, whose interpretations are generally curious, and important, says (*g*); that Christ here attributes to himself, what belonged only to the Divine Wisdom, the *logos*, the *Word*, with which he was always inspired: speaking as if he had been actually in heaven, because the Divine Wisdom, which was thus, in a figurative sense, a part of him, was always with God in heaven.

(*b*) Dr. Lardner, who commends Grotius, adds; 'I have been apt to think, that thereby our Lord intended only to say, that he should not always be

(*g*) Tribuit Christus sibi quod τὸ λόγῳ (verbo) convenit: Quidni? cum et animum et corpus seorsum soleamus appellare hominis vocabulo, &c. Grotius in loc.

(*b*) Four Discourses on Philip. ii. 5. in a posthumous work, first published by the Rev. Mr. Wiche of Maidstone; printed for Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard.

‘be personally here, but should leave this world: which was the most discouraging thought to all the carnal jews, and much suited to his purpose on the present occasion.’ And Bishop Pearce remarks here in the same way; ‘The death of Jesus, and his absence from them at that time, was a great stumbling block to his disciples,’ as appears from Luke xxiv. 21. 25. I would add, that thus we seem to have obtained a probable construction of this professedly ambiguous language, which our Lord uses throughout this chapter, and in this particular part above the rest. But should we not have been able to develop its meaning, will any be so injudicious as to say, that the obscure passage concerning Christ is to be set up against the whole stream and tenor of the scripture declarations concerning him?

John viii. 58. *Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you; before Abraham was I am.*

Those who look upon Christ as the supreme God, reckon, that he here directly declares it, by taking to himself the proper name of God, Exod. iii. 14. which we translate, *I am what I am.*

But if St. John had entertained an idea of his divine master making this allusion, he would have adopted the septuagint version, as was customary with the writers of the New Testament, and would have introduced Christ saying, *εγω ειμι ο ων,*

I am the self-existent Being; which would have

but which, according to the very learned ^{but} Geddies, should be, "I will be what I will be," and so afterwards - "He that will be hath sent me unto you."

put the matter out of all doubt: whereas the words he now uses, convey nothing of the sort, and will by no means bear such construction.

For it has been observed by the best critics, that the phrase *εγω ειμι*, *I am*, is never used absolutely in the New Testament, but always with relation to some subject in hand. Now if we inquire what it is that our Lord refers to here, it is most probably to his own declaration, with which he sets out, in the beginning of these mens cavil and dispute with him, ver. 12. *I am the light of the world*; asserting himself to be the Messiah, the Christ, in language borrowed from their antient prophets. And therefore the words should have been translated before Abraham was, *I am the light of the world, i. e. the Christ*.

It is remarkable, that our english translators, twice in this very chapter, ver. 24. 28. have rendered the words in question, *εγω ειμι*, *I am he*, that is, *the Christ*: supposing on good grounds the expression to be elliptical; and referring to something that our Lord would have to be understood concerning himself: but it would have been better to have marked his meaning (i) exactly, by

(i) See "Observations upon the expedience of revising the present english version of the four gospels, and of the Acts of the Apostles, by John Symonds, L.L.D." p. 34: a valuable work, that must be of great use, whenever a new version is undertaken.

by putting, I am the light of the world, or I am the Christ, instead of I am *be*. And it may well be presumed, that they would have translated the same phrase here, ver. 58. before, Abraham was, I am *be*, as they had translated it twice before in the same chapter, if they had not been hindered by their prejudices, and persuasion, that Christ was the most high God, and been unwilling to part with a text, which they thought made so greatly for it. *ah!*

With respect to our Lord here saying; that he was the Christ before Abraham was; it is an idiom of speech familiar with the sacred writers, to affirm things or persons to exist, when it was only an existence in the divine foresight and councils, to take place in some future time. Thus Rev. xiii. 8. Christ is called *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Eph. i. 4. Christians are said to have *been chosen before the foundation of the world*. Matt. xxv. 3. Our Saviour speaks of the future, happiness of his faithful followers being *prepared for them from the foundation of the world*. And so Christ said that he was before Abraham, *i. e.* in the divine designation and appointment of him, as the Messiah. *B*

The interpretation here furnished to you of these words of Christ, is not forced, or foreign, but in perfect agreement with the grammatical construction of them, and with the hebrew phraseology.

¶ whole names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that had been slain.
Walsby
 + *This is explaining Scripture by Scripture.*

But the sense usually put upon them, is ungrammatical, strange, and confounding to the rational mind. For however, we, christians, through custom from our childhood, can bear it, the jews in our Saviour's time, and indeed to do them justice, now, and at all times, would have been shocked at the most distant idea, of a mortal man, such as our Saviour stood before them, and always owned himself, being at the same time, the most high and eternal God, Jehovah, the God of their fathers.

In fine, supposing, if it be possible to be supposed, that this was true; is it credible, that our Lord should, in such a way, tell a set of men, who reviled him in the most odious terms, and were pursuing his life; tell them, that he was the most high God in such direct terms, as is supposed, a thing so wondrous, which he kept intirely secret from his apostles, and never told them in any shape. No: no: our Lord threw out this ambiguous phrase to mortify those incorrigible men the more, although they might have readily understood him, if their minds had not been so heated, and exasperated against him. Wetstein, after producing various other instances in the evangelists, of *εγω ειμι*, *I am*, being an elliptical expression, and signifying, *I am the Christ, the Messiah*; concludes thus. 'If therefore we interpret the phrase in the same way here, John viii. 58. it will be as if our Lord

‘ Lord had said; I am the Messiah, promised to
 ‘ Adam, Enoch, Noah, and the patriarchs, and
 ‘ expected long before Abraham was born.’

John xvii. 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou
 me with thine own self, with the glory which I had
 with thee before the world began!*

You have seen from our Saviour's own interpretation of that language, which he uses concerning himself, of his *coming down from heaven, coming into the world, coming forth from the Father, being before Abraham*, and the like; that he is far from intending thereby to teach, that he had an existence in another world, before he was born in Judea. And yet it is principally on account of these passages of scripture, and of that which we are now to discuss, of his *praying for the glory which he had with the Father before the world was*, that such outcries have been raised against those who cannot see any force in them, or understand, that Christ himself meant thereby, to prove his pre-existence, as it is called. And they are particularly branded with the name of *Socinians*, as conveying the idea of something very horrid in their opinions; although *Socinus*, from whom the name is given them, was an eminent servant of God, raised up to reform the christian world, lost in idolatry and ignorance of the one living and true God; and to say the least of him, was not inferior in piety and virtue to Luther, Calvin, or any of our
 english

english reformers; and in the knowlege of the scriptures, much their superior.

We are accused, (that I may rank myself in a list of which there is no cause to be ashamed) and condemned, unheard, for contradicting and denying the literal and obvious sense of scripture. Allowing the accusation to be just, it does not follow, that such persons are in the wrong. For there may be an obvious sense of a passage in a writer, which is not the true one. We read, for example, John vi. 58, &c. *Then Jesus replied; verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* In such instances, you hesitate not to reject the literal and obvious or apparent sense, without scruple. And as our Lord in the foregoing citations of his words, has shewn you, that the literal meaning of his *coming down from heaven*, and the like, was not intended by him, I have no doubt of your being convinced by him now, that he does not here pray for any glory of which he had been actually possessed; and therefore that his words afford no proof of his having existed in a former state.

Undoubtedly, at first sight, they bear the appearance of it. *Father, glorify thou me, with thine ownself,*

ownself, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was.

But first, let us see what he teaches concerning this glory that he here speaks of. A day or two before that our Lord uttered these words in prayer with his disciples; when *certain Greeks*, or devout gentiles who had come up to worship the true God at Jerusalem, desired to have access to him, we are told he broke out into this joyful exclamation—John xii. 23. 24. *Jesus answered them; the hour is come, that the Son of man shall be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* Although sensible that his own violent death must lead the way to it, he rejoices in the near prospect of his being glorified, that is, of attaining the glory he aimed at, in the heathen world being brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to eternal life, by the preaching of the gospel: for so the occasion plainly leads us to understand his words. The *glory* of Christ therefore, from his own account of it, was, that by the effectual propagation of the gospel, he might become the happy instrument of the salvation of mankind.

That this is a just account of the *glory*, for which Christ now made his supplication to Almighty God, is confirmed by what he goes on to say in his prayer concerning it; that he had promised

mised his disciples that they should be sharers with him in it, ver. 22. *And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them: that they may be one, as we are one.* For there was no other glory in common with Christ and his apostles, or which was likely to occur to his mind at that time, but what related to the success of the gospel, which he was sending them forth to propagate over the whole earth. And that it was not any thing belonging to him as a preexistent being, but something hitherto not actually enjoyed by him or his disciples, yet most surely to be expected, is evident from the same form of expression which he uses with regard to both him and them. *The glory*, says he, *which thou hast given me, I have given them:* he had not actually given it to them, for they were not in the possession of it; but he had made them an absolute promise of it, as God had made to him; that they, together with himself, should have the honour of contributing to the virtue and everlasting happiness of all men by the gospel.

This is further confirmed by what our Lord also declares, that the glory which he prayed for, was to be something consequent upon, and a reward of his fidelity and labours in the work assigned him by Almighty God, and therefore could not have been before enjoyed by him. ver. 4. *I have finish-*

ed

ed the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me, &c.

I spare to speak of the incongruity, might I not say, the absurdity, of making our Lord supplicate as a reward of his services, what, according to their supposition, could be no reward, nothing but what he had enjoyed before from all eternity. As to the nonsense of Christ being possessed of *two natures*, or *two capacities*, and his praying only for his human nature or capacity to be exalted and rewarded; it is an interpretation that must be left to be received by those who can believe and swallow such things.

Our Lord's saying, that he *had this glory with the Father before the world was*, though he had not yet enjoyed it, that is, had it destined or designed for him by the Father, is an instance of the same peculiarity of phrase mentioned above p. 73. common to our Lord himself, and the New-Testament-writers, in speaking of things as existing, when it was only an existence in the divine decree and appointment, to take place at some future time. To the examples there alleged, may be added, 1 Pet. i. 20. *that Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world*; Acts iii. 20. *that he was before appointed*; i. e. destined beforehand in the divine councils to be sent to us; and 2 Tim. i. 9. *that God's grace, or favour was given*

given us in Christ Jesus; before the world began (k).

Of the apostle Thomas's saying to Christ, on being convinced, that he was actually raised from the dead.

John xx. 28. *And Thomas answered and said, unto him; my Lord, and my God.*

I shall give you what I have no doubt will appear to you most satisfactory, the remarks of Dr. Whitby, upon this passage in our evangelist, in his (l) "Last Thoughts," to which he prefixes this

(k) The interpretation of this passage, that Christ had glory with the Father before the world was in this sense only, because it was what was designed and decreed beforehand for him; is well exemplified by Clemens Alexandrinus, who speaks of this honourable notice from Almighty God, being a peculiar privilege of christians in general; *πρὸ δὲ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου καταβολῆς ἡμῖς.* says he, *ὃι, τῷ θεῷ εἶσθαι, πάλαι ἀπὸ τοῦ γένεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ.* i. e. We christians, says he, were before the foundation of the world; for we then preexisted in God; who had decreed our future existence. Ed. Potter. p. 6.

(l) If the publisher and venders of Dr. Whitby's Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament, would deal honestly by that celebrated author and most upright man, and act faithfully towards the public, they should reprint and annex to that work, this tract, whose title at length is 'ΤΕΤΕΡΑΙ ΦΟΝΤΙΑΕΕ. Or, The Last Thoughts of Dr. Whitby. Containing his correction of several passages in his commentary on the New Testament. To which are added, Five Discourses. Published by his express order. London, 1727.'

this declaration:—I proceed now to expound
 some passages of scripture, which seem to have
 been misunderstood by most modern expositors,
 and sometimes also by *myself*.

Nor can Christ's being God equal to the Father
 be inferred from those words of Thomas, *my Lord,*
and my God; as will appear from this consideration,
 that the faith of Thomas was only this, that Jesus
 was really risen from the dead. For when the a-
 postles had told him, that they had seen the Lord,
 he answers, *except I shall see in his hands the*
prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into his
side, I will not believe it. Then Christ coming a
 second time, saith unto him, *Reach hither thy fin-*
ger, and behold my hands; and reach kither thy
hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faith-
less but believing; viz. believing that *I am risen.*
 Our Saviour then saith, *Thomas, because thou hast*
seen me, thou hast believed; which shews, that he
 could believe only what he had seen, to wit, that
 the same body was raised, which had been cru-
 cified. Neither had he seen, nor could he see
 with his bodily eyes, that he who was thus raised,
 was his Lord and his God.

The words therefore, *My Lord, and my God,*
 may have this import; *My Lord and my God have*
done this; and so they exactly agree with the faith
 of the apostles, *the God of our fathers raised up*

‘Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Acts v.
 ‘20. See ii. 24. iii. 15. iv. 10. xiii. 30. or thus,
 ‘My Lord, and my God, how great is thy power!
 ‘for saith St. Paul, *God exerted the greatness of his*
 ‘*power and the activity of his might, in raising our*
 ‘*Lord Jesus from the dead.* Eph. i. 19. 20. But
 ‘whether this be the true import of Thomas’s words
 ‘or no, certain it is, that it cannot be proved, that
 ‘he intended by them to signify that he owned Jesus
 ‘Christ as his Lord and his God.” Whitby’s Last
 Thoughts, p. 28. 29.

Dr. Whitby is not singular, or original, in this
 judicious reasoning upon the exclamation of the
 apostle Thomas. It was adopted by a very able in-
 terpreter of scripture, at the latter end of the 4th
 century, Theodore (*m*) Bishop of Mopsuestia in
 Cilicia; whose words I give in the margin. If any
 thing should be thought necessary to confirm his
 judgment, that Thomas did not intend to call
 Christ, Lord or God; I would mention that St.
 John, the writer of this gospel, cannot be supposed
 to be so inconsistent, as to put down a saying of
 his

(*m*) In his commentary on St. John’s gospel, Theodore says,
 ‘that when Thomas made that confession to Christ, my Lord,
 ‘and my God, John xx. 28. he did not call Christ, Lord and
 ‘God: but being astonished at the great miracle of his resur-
 ‘rection, and the full evidence of it, which had been afforded
 ‘to him, he *praised* God, who had raised Christ from the
 ‘dead. *Nor is the being raised from the dead a proof of deity.*’
 Lardner’s Works. Vol. iv. p. 514. 515.

his fellow-apostle, flatly opposing a declaration of his divine master Jesus himself, a few verses before; whom he introduces declaring, John xx. 17. that so far from being God himself, he had the same God and Father in common with his disciples. And moreover, the supposition of Thomas here calling Christ, God, is overruled and confuted by the fact related, Acts iv. 23, &c. where all the apostles, and Thomas therefore it may be presumed along with them, join in solemn prayer, in which Jesus is twice called *the servant* of the supreme Being, and creator of all things, to whom they address themselves. And it is not possible, that any one should be the eternal God, and his servant at the same time.

C O R O L L A R Y.

Thus, upon very particular inquiry, we have found, that the evangelist St. John had no new doctrine to deliver, concerning his master Jesus Christ, different from the other apostles. He intirely agrees with them, in describing our Lord, as one of the human race, sent from God, or commissioned as a divine messenger or prophet, to teach his will to mankind. And as to those expressions of his *coming into the world, coming down from heaven, coming forth from the Father, &c.*; from our Lord's own explanation of them we have

been instructed, that they had no reference to his having lived in heaven before he came upon this earth, but are only declaratory in other words, in the prophetic eastern stile, of his high office and commission from Almighty God, as the Christ, the Messiah.

So that by the testimony of two of the historians of Christ's life, who were his apostles, and intimately acquainted with him; and of two others of them, who lived on most friendly terms, and conversed with his apostles, we are assured, that our Lord was not God, nor a preexistent being; but was a human creature, like others, excepting the extraordinary power which he received from God, to fit him for his office under his moral government, as teacher and Saviour of mankind.

SECTION VIII.

Of the design of St. Luke's second treatise, called
THE ACTS.

One of these writers of the memoirs of our Lord's life, St. Luke, was directed by a good providence, in continuation of that work, to give us a history of the way in which his divine master's religion, after his death and resurrection, was propagated over a great part of the known world; and

and hath acquainted us particularly with the extraordinary divine interpositions, by which it was confirmed and established; and the manner in which it was preached to jews and heathens.

An authentic narrative of facts like these, is of the utmost moment. And the evidence resulting from them is most convincing, and irresistible, for the truth of the gospel in general, and also for this particular fact, that there is but one God, the Father of the universe, and that Jesus, who was one of the hebrew nation, was the servant of that God, raised up and employed by him on his high commands.

But as some have sought of late to invalidate the most solid proofs, which this latter treatise of St. Luke's affords for the Divine Unity and the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, I shall hope to do some service by a full exhibition, with brief remarks, of his testimony to both of them.

Of the testimony to the person and character of Jesus Christ, as the servant of the one only true God, the Father, furnished by St. Luke, in his second treatise, called The Acts of the Apostles.

Acts i. *These all continued, with one accord, in*
14. *prayer and supplication, with the women; and*
Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren.
Mary is here called the mother of Jesus,

Acts. and some other persons, his brethren or kinsmen. If therefore they were human creatures, he that was of their kindred, and the son of one of them, must have been also a human creature. You will observe that our Lord is thus characterized after his resurrection, and exaltation in heaven.

MS.
i. 24. *And they (the eleven apostles) prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew, whether of these two thou hast chosen.* The ambiguity of the word, *Κυριος*, Lord, in the greek original, promiscuously applied to God, and to his creatures, has led many who had already taken up an erroneous persuasion that Jesus was the eternal God, to imagine, that it was to him that the apostles now prayed. And this, if true, would doubtless be a proof of his divinity.

But you will easily perceive this to be a very great mistake. For the sacred writings, constantly and invariably testify, that there is but one person, one LORD Jehovah, who knoweth the hearts of men. 1 Kings viii. 39. *For THOU, O Jehovah, THOU only knowest the hearts of all the children of MEN.* See Jerem. xvii. 10. &c. &c. And that it was God, and not Jesus Christ, who

Acts. who was the person intended here; our historian teaches a little afterwards, xv. 8. where he says, God, *who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness.*

Moreover, although it has been alleged, that Christ saith of himself, Rev. ii. 23. *I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts*: it should be attended to at the same time, that the writer begins this book of *the Revelation*, with declaring, that Jesus Christ had received the whole of what he therein reveals, from God (*n*); so that the knowledge of the hearts that he speaks of went not farther than was given him upon the occasion. This interpretation will receive more confirmation, if needed, by what will farther appear in the progress of St. Luke's history, concerning the light in which the apostles considered their master Jesus, and the uniform direction of their prayers to God only,

F 4

The

(*n*) Revel. i. 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.*

The testimony of Peter and the other eleven apostles, concerning Christ, after his resurrection, and exaltation in heaven.

Acts ii. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words.*
 22. 24. *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, by wicked hands, ye have crucified and slain.* Words could not easily be devised, that should with more exactness delineate one of the human race, than those which the apostle uses to describe his master Jesus to his countrymen, as a mere man, like one of them, acting with an authority from God, of which he gave proof by the extraordinary powers he received from God. Such language is too plain and decisive, to need dwelling or expatiating upon it. It tells at once the opinion (o) of all the apostles, who their divine master was.

Acts ii.

(o) At the beginning of Peter's speech, ver. 11. it is said, *Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said; &c.* He was therefore the spokesman of the other apostles, and may certainly be presumed to deliver their sentiments no less than his own.

Acts ii. *Therefore (David) being a prophet, and*

30. *knowing, that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh (better rendered by natural descent) he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne,—Peter here again represents his master Jesus, as one of David's family, descended from him; like him therefore, a human being.*

33. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, he (p) hath shed*

(p) I would propose only to your consideration, whether, though Christ is mentioned, God alone is not to be considered as the agent, agreeably to the general language of the prophets, and to that of our Lord in particular upon this subject. For it is customary with the prophets to say, that they did or will do certain extraordinary things, when it was only intended that God, who sent them, (Deut. xi, 14. 15. xvi. 22.) did or would do them according to their word. So when our Lord says, John xiv. 13. 14. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it:* it is not probably his own personal agency that Christ here speaks of, but only that God would answer their prayer according to the promise from him, which he had made them. And this construction seems confirmed by John xv. 16. xvi. 23. *Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you;* where, note, God himself is by our Lord said, to be the agent, the doer of the things, which in the preceding passage

Acts. shed forth this which ye now see and bear.
 The apostle refers to the recent gift of tongues, of speaking in languages they had never learned. which had been that very day only imparted to them. And in the connection of his discourse, nothing more can be inferred from it, than that Jesus, the person he had been just describing, being taken up, and raised to dignity in the invisible world, had, in some way or other, been the instrument of God, in communicating this gift to his apostles.

ii. 36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* It was remarked above, p. 86. that the ambiguous signification of the term, *Kyrios, Lord*, in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, which is applied indifferently to Almighty God, and to other persons in dignity and authority, has given a handle to unlearned, heedless, and prejudiced readers of the scripture, to make
 Jesus

passage he had said, that he (Christ) should do: In the same way, Christ's promise, Luke xxi. 15. of himself giving a mouth and wisdom to his disciples, which their adversaries would not be able to gainsay or resist, is to be understood of the holy spirit, i. e. the extraordinary gifts and assistance, which God would bestow upon them, according to Christ's promise,

Acts. Jesus Christ to be the eternal God. But here all ambiguity is taken away, in the application of the word, *Κυριος*, *Lord*, to Jesus Christ. For this declaration of the apostle Peter, in his own name and that of his fellow-disciples, who could not be ignorant of the quality and condition of their master Jesus, teaches us; that the name, *Lord*, as well as *Christ*, whatever office or preeminence is to be understood by them, belongs to Jesus, from the gift and appointment of God. This is also confirmed by the apostle Paul, who had part of his instruction concerning the gospel, from our Saviour himself, after he was taken up into heaven; and who says, Philip, ii. 8. &c. that *because Christ Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; Therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and of his special favour bestowed upon him, ὑπερπαντων, a name above every name—that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.*

It follows hence, by the testimony of all the apostles, that the blessed Jesus is only such a *Lord*, as it hath pleased God to make him. It follows also, and you will do well to keep it always in memory, that

that this word *Κυριος*, *Lord*, when it stands for Almighty God, in the Bible, cannot belong to Jesus Christ; who is only a Lord, made and appointed by God.

Acts iii. *In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up*

6. *and walk.* When a miraculous cure was to be wrought, to convince men of the divine authority of Jesus and his religion, his apostles Peter and John, although he was then in a state of exaltation in heaven, do nevertheless call him the man of Nazareth, the great prophet, who, for so long a space, had his abode in that obscure town. They do not say, "Be thou healed in the name of "the *Word incarnate*, or of *God the son*, or of "the *second person in the Trinity*." The apostles were not acquainted with any such character or person.

13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our father, hath glorified his (q) servant Jesus.*

Here

(q) Bengelius, renders it, *ministerium suum*, his servant; and refers it to Matth. xii. 18. where the evangelist cites the Almighty, in Isaiah xlii. 1. styling the future Christ, *my servant*. See also xlix. 3. 5. Our Lord's language was uniformly in exact agreement with this, calling himself, him whom God hath sent; i. e. his messenger, his servant. Reader, whoever thou art, presume not then, to call Jesus, God, whom

Here our Saviour is distinguished from God, as being his servant.

Justin Martyr, many of the antient and modern christian writers, Mr. Whiston, Dr. Clarke, the late Ben Mordecai, Mr. Taylor, are all of them here confuted in their assertions, that Jesus Christ was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who appeared to Moses: for the apostle styles him only the servant of that God.

Acts iii. — *But ye denied the holy one and the just:*

14. It might with more propriety, nay ought to be translated; *But ye denied that holy and just man.* And yet there are scholars in our day, who, caught by the mere sound in english, and too much bent on finding Christ's divinity every where, can fancy they have discovered a proof of it here; and, merely this, because Almighty God, by the prophets, is also frequently stiled *the holy one*, by way of eminence; i. e. holy in the highest degree; others being holy only in different degrees, all at an infinite distance from him: and Christ, and
all

whom God calls his servant, and who calls himself God's servant! And do thou no more worship and pray to the servant; but worship God!

all other beings are excluded by the very term.

Actsiii. *And killed the prince of life.* The reading, which our translators have put in the margin, being, *killed the author of life*, some persons have laid hold of it, as teaching that Christ must have had life in himself from all eternity, and of course be the eternal God. But they did not sufficiently consider, that the life the apostle is speaking of, is eternal life; and that the proper meaning of the word *αρχηγος*, is the chief leader or conductor, and that the passage ought to be translated, *killed the leader to life (r)*; which puts an end to all such fond and polytheistical imaginations.

22. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers: a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken in all things.* The Messiah, Christ, is here mentioned by the apostle to have been promised by Almighty God to Moses; and he is described, so many ages before he had existence, intirely as one of the human race, and of the hebrew nation. As such the nation always

(r) Hardy, in his Gr. Test. has a good remark upon the place. 'Principem vitæ; i. e. enim qui unus est dux ad vitam eternam. *The prince of life*; i. e. him who is the only guide to life eternal.'

Acts. ways expected him : and as such the apostle speaks of him ; not as belonging to any higher class of beings, much less as the eternal God.

iii. 26. *Unto you first, God having raised up his servant(s) Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.* Jesus is again stiled God's servant, by the apostle Peter, when describing him to his countrymen.

iv. 10. *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God*

(s) Dr. Jortin, in a discourse on this text, through an inattention not common to him, falls into very great mistakes : first, by wrongly translating the word, *παῖς*, as if it was *υἱός*, *thy son*, instead of *thy servant* ; next in descanting largely on the phrase, *Son of God*, as intimating the divinity of Christ's person. His friend Bishop Pearce, or his own admirable critical abilities, had he made use of them here, would have taught him, that in the writings of the evangelists, *Son of God*, and *the Christ, the Messiah*, are synonymous ; and also that no metaphysical, unintelligible generation is to be understood by the former phrase, *Son of God*. But we are to remember, that though his sermons are in general the best, the most liberal, and the most useful of any in our language, the three last volumes were posthumous, and not always the most judiciously selected. I have mentioned this with no other view, but to prevent the name of this ingenious and most pleasing writer, and excellent man, from misleading his readers in a matter of some importance.

Acts. God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Certainly the numerous hearers of the apostle Peter would understand him to speak only of Jesus, as a human creature, (highly favoured of God,) like themselves; one, who was their great expected prophet, and whose principal abode, for the first and greatest part of his life, was at Nazareth. The apostles were not ashamed of their lord and master Jesus having been originally a mortal man of low condition, and no education; but gloried in it. For this shewed the more evidently, that his extraordinary wisdom and powers were from God, as he constantly declared; and that he was commissioned by him.

Actsiv. And they, the apostles Peter and John, 23, 31. being set at liberty, went to their own company, viz. the rest of the apostles and other principal followers of Christ then at Jerusalem, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them; who had threatened them with further punishment; if they dared to speak at all, or to teach in the name of Jesus. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God, with one accord, and said, *Διεσθὲς*, Sovereign Lord of all, thou art the God, who hast made

Acts. made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done in the name of thy holy servant Jesus.

Here we have a model of christian worship, in what will be acknowledged a truly primitive church, composed of the apostles, of our Lord's mother Mary, and his relations, i. 14. and other disciples of Christ. And their example will be allowed by all christians of a sound mind, to be worthy of our regards, and imitation. The most striking circumstance is the object of their worship. This is God only; the single person of the creator of all things. There

Acts. are no invocations of *God the son, of God the holy Ghost, or of a holy, blessed and glorious Trinity*, composed of three divine persons. Their prayers are directed to the single person of the sovereign Lord of all, the creator of all things, intreating his extraordinary aid, in support of the religion, which his holy servant Jesus had delivered to them.

2. In the devotions of these truly primitive christians, Jesus Christ is so far from being reckoned God, or an object of worship; that he is therein stiled, after his resurrection and exaltation in heaven, the servant of that God to whom they address their prayer. And the same term is used in the original, *παῖς*, when they call David, as when they call Jesus, God's servant.

3. It is referred to your judgments, whether, with this example of the apostles before us, when we speak of Christ in our addressees to the Almighty, it would not be proper sometimes to say thy servant Jesus, and not always thy son Jesus Christ, as is commonly done in the prayers of christians. Certainly, if this apostolic pattern

Acts. tern of prayer had been copied in this respect, by all christians, from the beginning, it might have given some check to the groundless, unintelligible doctrine of an eternal generation of Christ as the *Son of God*; and might have preserved them from that sad degradation of the infinite Being, in putting the blessed Jesus, his servant, upon a level with him, and paying equal honour, reverence and worship to the servant, as to the sovereign lord and creator.

4. As the apostle John joined in this prayer with the other apostles and christians that were assembled, if he did not himself lead their devotions; we may hence most assuredly conclude, that, in the beginning of his gospel, he could never call Christ, the *logos*, *God*, *the word*, by whom all things were created. For this would have been acting in direct contradiction to what he himself here asserts, and agrees to, in conjunction with all the other apostles; that Jesus was the servant of that God who made the world and all things in it. And this may serve to confirm the interpretation above assigned, of this preface of John's gospel, *viz.* that the *logos*, the word, or wisdom, which he there speaks of, by which all things were made,

probable

could not be Jesus Christ; but was the word or wisdom of God, which is God himself, the sole creator of all things.

Acts v. Peter said, *Ananias, why hath Satan*
 3. 4. 9. *filled thine heart to lie to the holy ghost? why*
hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?
thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.—
How is it that ye have agreed together to
tempt the spirit of the Lord? If instead of the
holy ghost, which by custom and long habit
 leads christians superstitiously educated, to
 think that it is a divine person, that is here,
 spoken of, the word *πνευμα* had been
 translated *spirit*, (*holy spirit*) as it is imme-
 diately after, and always ought to be, the
 most ordinary understanding would have
 seen, that it is not a divine person, another
 God, here intended, but the divine power,
 or spirit of God, which was imparted to
 the apostles. The apostle Peter's words
 impart only this, that the attempting to
 deceive persons inspired with the holy spi-
 rit, was not barely an attempt to deceive
 them, but God himself, who had given
 them such extraordinary powers. The
 famous Athanasius himself (see Dr. Clarke's
 Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 44.)
 gives here the following interpretation.
 * He that lied to the holy spirit, lied to
 * God,

Acts. ' God, who dwelled in man by his spirit.
 ' For where the spirit of God is, there is
 ' God himself. *For hereby, saith the*
' apostle, we know that God dwelleth in us,
' because he hath given us of his spirit.'
 Those therefore who find *a sin against the*
third person in the HOLY TRINITY here,
 must bring the same along with them
 from their own invention: for the apostle
 Peter assuredly knew nothing about such
 a person, one among three.

Acts v. *Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered*
29, &c. and said to the rulers of the country, before
whom they were again convened, for
preaching in the name of Jesus: we ought
to obey God rather than man. The God of
our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew,
and hanged on a tree: Him hath God exalted
with his right hand, to be a leader and a
saviour, to give repentance to Israel and for-
giveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of
these things; so is also the holy ghost (rather
holy spirit) whom God hath given to them
that obey him. It appears here, that Peter
 and all the apostles acknowledged, when
 christians, the same God, as when they
 were jews; the same with their unbelieving
 rulers before whom they now stood; the
 the single person of Jehovah, the God of

be i Acts, their fathers. If any therefore acknowledge any other persons as Gods, or more persons than one, they worship a different God from the apostles.

Peter also, speaking in the name of them all, describes Jesus to their rulers as a man in all respects, one of their own nation, who had been unrighteously put to an infamous death by them; but whom God had speedily raised to life, and distinguished with extraordinary favour, in making him his instrument in bringing men to virtue and eternal life.

You observe here again an entire confutation of the heathen polytheistic doctrine, first brought in by Justin Martyr, and retailed by a great part of christian writers and commentators since, as will be shewn hereafter; which made Christ, a divine Person, who spoke to Moses, and who stiled himself, *the God of their fathers*. But the apostles make them as different as a favoured human creature can be from its infinite creator,

v. 42. *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ, or as Bishop Pearce puts it, that Jesus is the Christ.* Their doctrine concerning Jesus was, that he was the

Acts. the great prophet, teacher and saviour, whom God had promised to raise up among them, the Christ. This was what they thought necessary to insist upon concerning him. If any higher title or dignity had belonged to Jesus, they would surely have told it.

Acts vii. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon* 59. 60. *Jesus in these (1) words, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Stephen in his free speech just before, which had given great offence, had stiled Jesus, ver. 37, referring to Deut. xviii. 15. 18. *a prophet like unto Moses, one of THEIR brethren*, also ver. 52. *that just man*; and at the moment they rushed on him to drag him away to stone him, he had called Jesus, *the son of man*, declaring that he then beheld him in a vision, at the right hand of God.

You must judge for yourselves, whether it was possible for Stephen to invoke one, whom at the very instant he stiled *the son of man* standing at the right hand of God, either as that God at whose

G 4

right

(1) Ainsi fut lapidé Etienne, et cependant il invoquoit Jesus en ces termes, Seigneur Jesus, recevez mon esprit.
So L'Enfant translates ver. 59.

Acts; right hand he stood; or as being another God, equal to him: Or, whether his application to Jesus, at this time, was not owing to the impression of the vision he had been favoured with, a few minutes before, in which he had seen Jesus present to him, and as such desired his protection, without conceiving him to be any other than a human creature extraordinarily favoured by the Almighty. This being done, after some interval more or less, his mind being less agitated, and more recollected, to let his murderers see with what dispositions towards them he went out of the world, he kneeled down, it is said (*u*), and prayed aloud for the divine forgiveness of them: therein shewing the

(*u*) Some may be pleased to observe, that it was so understood, as a prayer to God and not to Christ, by the very early, respectable author, whoever he was, of the epistle to the churches of Vienne and Lyons in France, in his relation of the sufferers there for the gospel, commending their pious and humane dispositions, he says; ‘They prayed for those who grievously treated them, as did Stephen, the perfect martyr; *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!*’ They did not proudly glory over those that fell: i. e. who through the violence of the persecution denied Christ. On such of them as were indigent, they bestowed those good things with which they themselves abounded: having bowels of compassion, they poured out many tears for them to the FATHER.’

Acts. the like temper, if he did not copy the example of his master Jesus, who so far from being God, did himself offer a similar prayer to God, at the moment of his death, Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* I would further observe, that the sacred historian, St. Luke, would have put Stephen's two invocations, the first, of Jesus, the second, of God, more distinct and apart, if he had entertained any suspicion, that christians could ever have fallen into the deplorable error of making his divine master, the son of man, Jesus of Nazareth, the most high and eternal God.

Acts viii. *And who shall declare his generation?*

33. Some suppose, that from this passage in Isaiah liii. Philip taught the eunuch, that Christ was the eternal son of God. Bishop Lowth however renders the passage, *And the manner of his life, who would declare?* very justly rejecting the usual rendering and supposed sense of the words, which it had been customary to produce as a proof of Christ's preexistence, from the times of Justin Martyr to our own. But the right translation of them is, *And the men of his generation*

ration who will be able to describe? See Commentaries and Essays. Vol. I. p. 44. 45 (x).
and M. Grand Transl. of Isaiah 53.
 Acts ix. I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Our

5. Lord, in his highest exaltation, tells Paul, that he is the man that went by the name of Jesus, i. e. who a few years before was born, and had his abode on this earth. But the christian world hath been almost from the first ashamed of him in that character. It is to be hoped that many are now returning

(u) Isai. liii. 8. *Et generationem ejus quis enarrabit.*] Quisquis attento animo ea quæ hic precedunt et sequuntur, respexerit, videbit hæc verba intelligenda esse de summa impietate generationis istius, in qua vixit Christus, et quorum conatibus in crucem actus est. Hoc tamen non obstante, Patres fere omnes ab initio sententiam Hieronymi amplexi sunt: cujus hæc sunt verba: ‘Dupliciter hoc intelligitur, aut enim de divinitate ejus accipiendum est, quod impossibile sit divinæ nativitatis nosse mysteria; aut de partu virginis, quod difficulter possit exponi. i. e. ‘Whoever attentively considers the connection of the passage, will see that these words are spoken concerning the great impiety of *that generation of men* in which Christ lived, and by whom he was crucified. Nevertheless almost all the fathers from the beginning have embraced Jerom’s interpretation, who says; “The words are taken in a twofold sense: for they are to be understood, either as speaking of his divinity, that it is impossible to comprehend the mysteries of his divine generation; or of his miraculous conception of a virgin, that it can very difficultly be explained,” Whitby, *Stricturæ Patrum*, p. 104.

ing to those just sentiments of him, which he would have them to entertain.

Acts ix. *And here be bath authority from the chief*

14. 21. *priests, to bind all that call on thy name. Is*

not this he which destroyed them, which called

on this name in Jerusalem? It is evident,

that the followers of Christ, are those that are

here spoken of. But it will be plain to every

one, that St. Luke could not intend to

define them as a class of men, who were

distinguished by the circumstance of praying

to Christ, which the words convey in our

english translation; because, neither in his

history of Christ, which we call his gospel,

nor in this his second treatise, *The Acts*,

does he ever once denominate Christ, God,

or the object of prayer, or any thing ap-

proaching to it: but on the contrary, both

in this and in his former work, he describes

the Lord Jesus as a human being, a crea-

ture, and most devout worshipper of God

himself, and expressly directing his followers

to address their prayers to the Father only,

the Father equally of them and of him-

self: neither does he ever give any instance

of men worshipping Christ as God, or

praying to him. The words therefore must

be wrongly translated in this place. And

it

Acts. it has been shewn, (w) that it is agreeable to the usage of the greek language to render the phrase, *ἐπικαλούμενος το ὄνομα σου*, those that (x) are called by thy name; which should therefore be adopted, and not those that call upon thy name. And this exactly suits the design of St. Luke. For in the beginning of his account of this extraordinary transaction, ver. 2. he remarks, that Saul's orders were, *if he found any of this way, to send them bound to Jerusalem: Any of this way answers to any called by this name*, i. e. christians.

If this should seem to be an harsh, though it is not an unusual construction of the language, there is another, mentioned by

(w) See a Dissertation on praying to Christ. p. 96. 97.

(x) Dr. Hammond interprets 1 Cor. i. 2. not, those that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, but all that in every place are called by the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; understanding it as a description of Christians; and says that the same phrase, Acts ix. 14. is to be interpreted in the same manner. It is a like periphrasis, or description of christians, which is used in the following places, Rom. xv. 20. I strived to preach the gospel, *where Christ was not named*; i. e. where there were no christians. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity, i. e. every christian. James ii. 7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by which ye are called?

Acts. by a (y) learned, ingenious person, as suggested by a friend, against which there can be no objections, and which amounts to the same, by adopting another well-known sense of the same phrase, and a sense in which it is used several times by (z) St. Luke in this book. And this is, that it should signify those that *appeal to thy name*, i. e. acknowledge thine authority, call themselves christians; whom it was the sacred historian's design to describe in such a general way. It may be hoped then, that this passage of scripture will never be produced again, as encouraging prayer to Christ.

- ix. 20. *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* "Rather" *preached the Christ in the synagogues, that this man (viz. Jesus) is the Son of God.* The expressions, *the Christ* and *the Son of God* are equivalent, ver. 22. See Matthew xxiv. 63. and Mark xiv. 61. and comm.

(y) See 'Observations on the first part of Dr. Knowles's testimonies from the writers of the first four centuries.' By Capel Lofft, Esq. p. 25.

(z) Καίσαρα επικαλεσθαι, I appeal to Cæsar. Acts xxv. ii. See also ver. 12. 25. xxvi. 32. xxviii. 19.

Acts. comm. on Acts viii. 37." (a) This is Bp. Pearce's note and a very just amendment of our english translation. What now must be said of those who maintain, *at this day*, that when Paul preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God, he asserted him to be so by *eternal generation*?

ix. 22. *But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.*

✓ "Rather, *that this man (Jesus) is the Christ.*"

This is the same learned Bishop's note, and necessary amendment of our translation.

— 34. *And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, or rather, Jesus who is the Christ, Ἰησους ο Χριστος, maketh thee whole.* The apostle might express himself in this brief familiar manner, to this person, as he appears to have been already a believer, being mentioned ver. 32. as one of the *saints*, i. e. christians, that dwelt

(a) In the reference which the Bishop makes to Acts viii. 37. it is in our present translation, *And he answered and said. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*; which this judicious person says, should rather be rendered, *that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God*; yet at the same time shews in a note, that it is probable, the word, Christ, has been put in by some transcriber by mistake, and that St. Luke's words were, *I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Acts, dwelt at Lydda; and persons under paralytic affections have often their understandings not at all enfeebled. It is only however a different way of declaring what was done in the case of the lame man at the temple-gate, Acts iii. 6. 16. And therefore Pyle's paraphrase of the place is very proper.

'As soon as he came to him, Peter, says
'he, called him by his name, and bid him
'in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and
'be perfectly whole.'

Acts x. *Then Peter opened his mouth and said; of
34. 36. a truth I perceive that God is no respecter
of persons: but in every nation he that
feareth God and worketh righteousness, is ac-
cepted with him; according to the message
which he sent unto the children of Israel,
preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (he is Lord
of all)*—The apostle acquaints this roman
military officer, and his friends, who were
all of them of the race of the gentiles, that
he was now convinced that God, the com-
mon parent of mankind, did not confine
his favour to jews, to one nation only;
but that in every nation, the pious and
virtuously disposed, would be equally ob-
jects of his favour, and that this was the
purport of the message delivered from God
by Jesus Christ, whom, though a person of

Acts. no great worldly account, and unjustly put to an ignominious death, he had appointed the lord or head of all mankind, gentiles as well as jews. He then goes on to tell them, that they could not be strangers to the late extraordinary transaction in the country of the jews, where they themselves had resided; viz.

- x. 38. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, with the holy spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.*

The centurion Cornelius, and his company, are here informed, that our Lord was a man of the town of Nazareth in Judea, who had been distinguished from other men by extraordinary divine powers, which enabled him to do many miraculous cures, and to heal some of the most inveterate diseases, vulgarly ascribed to an evil spirit; by which he gave full proof of his mission from God. So that these first heathen converts are here taught; that God is the compassionate father of the whole human race; that Jesus was a man of the jewish nation, in a most extraordinary manner gifted and qualified by him to serve his benevolent purposes; and that the holy ghost,

Acts. ghost, or holy spirit, was nothing but God's extraordinary power, imparted to Christ: that very same power, which Peter immediately after mentions to have been imparted, ver. 43. 44. in an inferior degree, to this roman officer, and his attendants, who were all pious persons, and became convinced of the truth of the gospel, upon this occasion.

Acts xiii. *Of this man (David's) seed, hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.* This whole discourse at Antiöch is much to be remarked and attended to. It was the first that was made by Paul and Barnabas, when sent out by the college of the apostles to preach the gospel to the gentiles. The audience was composed of jews and gentiles. From Paul's speech to them; they would learn, that there was but one single person, who was the God and governor of the world, and who had been the God of the jewish people and peculiarly favourable to them: and that Jesus Christ, was a man of that nation, of the family of their king David, brought into being, and qualified in an extraordinary manner by the Almighty to serve his gracious purposes for all mankind, gentiles as well as jews: to whom he had given the fullest attestation; that

Acts. he was a divine messenger and teacher, in raising him to life in a short time, after he had been unrighteously put to death by the rulers of their country. If there had been any other God, besides the God of Israel; or if Jesus had been any other than a human creature, invested with high powers from that God, Paul and Barnabas cannot be supposed to have been so negligent and forgetful, as not to have told these jews and heathens of such extraordinary things. But as they are quite silent on these subjects, it may certainly be concluded, that not only they themselves, but the rest of the apostles, who, by divine admonition had deputed them to this service, knew nothing of them.

Acts xiv. *Then the priest of Jupiter, whose statue*
 13. 15. *was before their city, brought oxen and gar-*
lands unto the gates, and would have done
sacrifice with the people. Which when the
apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they
rent their clothes, and ran in among the
people, crying out, and saying, why do ye
these things? We are mortal men like your-
selves, and preach unto you, that ye should
turn from these vanities, unto the living God,
who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and
all things that are therein. St. Paul teaches
these

+ To Dr. Campbell.

A cts. these heathens, that there is but one person, who is God, and the creator of all things. This most assuredly excludes Jesus Christ from being God or the creator; if the apostle Paul's opinion is to be of any weight. *When will the time come that christians shall worship the one living God alone, whom Paul preached, without joining any other person of their own device, as god with him?* } *ah.*

xvi. 31. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and*
 — 34. *believing in God are only so far the same thing, as Jesus Christ received his commission and power from God.*

xvii. 23. *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them; and three sabbath days discoursed with them out of the scriptures; opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and have risen from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ.* We have here a sample of St. Paul's manner of preaching the gospel to the jews. He tells them that their antient prophets had foretold that the Messiah would be a suffering character, and that he should be unrighteously put to death; nevertheless, that he would be highly distinguished and owned by the Almighty, by being raised in a few days

Acts. to life again; and that Jesus, whom he
 xvii. preached to them, answered those characters. We are told nothing here of Christ being God, or the creator of the world, inferior or subordinate, which some christians have fancied they found in the hebrew scriptures; but that he was a man of the jewish nation, who nobly suffered for the truth, and recommended himself by it to the favour of God.

24. 31. *God that made the world, and all things that are therein,—the lord of heaven and earth, hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* St. Paul here acquaints his Athenian audience, in the most express terms, that the founder of our religion was one of the human race, that had been appointed to an important office and department under God, the sovereign creator of all things; who had given the fullest attestation to the character and mission of this his divine messenger, by raising him speedily to life after his unjust condemnation and death.

From the declaration of St. Paul to the heathens at Lystra and here to the Athenians,

Acts. nians, that there is but One God, in the xvii. strictest possible sense of the terms: and that this God was the creator of all things; and also that Jesus Christ was merely a human being, invested with an extraordinary commission, and powers from God: it follows, that the language used by this apostle in his epistles, which seems to sound quite the contrary, viz. Coloss. i. 16. (a) that *by Christ were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones*

H 3

or

(a) Col. i. 16. Si ex Epistola ad Ephesios interpretari debeamus quæ hic habentur, ut præstantissimi interpretes consentiunt, intelligenda hæc sunt de nova creatione, sive constitutione mundi—per adventum Christi, et prædicationem evangelii. Eph. i. 10, ii. 10—15. iii. 9. iv. 24.—porro hic et comm. 20. non dicit ο ορατος και η γη εκτισθη, sed τα εν ορατοις και τα εκτος γης, quo habitatores significantur, qui reconciliantur, Wetstein.—*that is;*

‘ Col. i. 16. *For by him were all things created, &c.*) If, according to the opinion of the most judicious critics, this passage is to be interpreted in agreement with what is advanced in the epistle to the Ephesians, it is to be understood of the *new* creation or constitution of the world, by the coming of Christ and the preaching of the gospel. Eph. i. 10. ii. 10.—15. iii. 9. iv. 24.—Moreover here, and at the 20th verse, he does not say, *heaven and earth were created*, but *the things* that are in heaven and on earth, by which are intended the inhabitants, who are reconciled to God.’

Acts. *or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him:* that this language, I say, cannot be understood to mean the natural and original formation of things: for that St. Paul could not so glaringly contradict himself, in assigning such creative powers to Christ, which he himself and the whole tenour of scripture ascribed to the single person of Jehovah. Something else therefore must have been intended by him. And it has accordingly been shewn, and will be found, that the word, to *create*, is used in different senses by the sacred writers; and, that the creation intended by St. Paul, in this epistle to the Colossians, is the great change and renewal of things, in the moral state of the world, brought about by the gospel of Christ.

xviii. 13. *This fellow persuadeth men to worship contrary to the law.* It is most probable, and has been the sentiment of judicious christians, that this is only a general malicious accusation thrown out against Paul by his countrymen, as if he was not to be classed among them, of their religion, who enjoyed peculiar privileges from the roman emperors; but that he was a man that introduced a new religion, and therefore

Acts, fore was not to be tolerated as belonging to them. This however would not have deserved notice by me on this occasion, if some persons had not lately supposed and maintained, that Paul was accused here of teaching the adoration of Christ, as God. Men may *suppose* what they please: but there is no proof that Paul ever taught, or that his countrymen accused him of any thing of the sort. His doctrine was uniformly the reverse: that Jesus was a person of his own nation, highly favoured and distinguished by Almighty God, the sole creator of all things, and only object of the devout worship of his creatures.

xviii. 28. *For he mightily convinced the jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ.* You learn here, that this eloquent and learned man, Apollos, after *that the way of God*, i. e. the doctrine of the gospel, *had been expounded to him more perfectly*, did not teach his countrymen that Jesus was Almighty God, or any thing above the condition of a man; but that he was a person honoured by him in an extraordinary manner, as his great prophet and messenger; viz. the Christ.

Acts. Take heed therefore to feed the church of
 xx. 28. God, which he hath purchased with his own
 blood. It should rather be, to feed the
 church of the Lord, i. e. of Jesus. For
 so it is written in the best and most an-
 cient copies, and cited by early christian
 authors.

xxii. 8. *And I answered, who art thou, Lord? And
 he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth,
 whom thou persecutest.* Our Lord here a-
 gain, as we have before had occasion to
 observe, does not forget his original hum-
 ble condition upon earth, after his being
 taken up to the heavenly mansions; but
 owns himself to be the man that went by
 the name of Jesus of Nazareth, because
 of his long abode in that obscure place.

— 14. *And he said, the God of our fathers hath
 chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his
 will, and see that just one, rather (that just
 man).* This pious jew, who here speaks,
 a disciple of Christ, of how long standing
 we know not, is chosen by our Lord, to
 be an instrument in bringing Paul acquaint-
 ed with the doctrine and evidences of his
 religion, and finishing his conversion to it,
 which himself had begun by appearing and
 speaking to him from heaven. And Ana-
 nias, who could not but know who Christ
 was,

Acts. was, gives him only the title of that *just man*: a title most glorious and honourable indeed, as any that could belong to a creature, but such as, without contradiction, marks him out to belong to the human species.

It is also much to be observed, that although Paul speaks with gratitude, as became him (*b*), of the favour done him by Christ, in choosing him to be an apostle; yet we are here taught, that it was a choice, in which Christ did not merely act of himself, but under the direction of Almighty God; to whom therefore ultimately and chiefly all thanks were due. *The God of our fathers, hath chosen thee, and so on.* And indeed Paul himself, though always sensible of the goodness of Christ to him, is not backward or unmindful in acknowledging, from whom that goodness originally came. *But when it pleased God* (says he to the Galatians i. 15.) *who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his favour, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathens, &c.* See Rom. i. 1. Eph. iii. 7. 8.

— 16. *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling*
on

(*b*) *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*

Acts. *on the name of the Lord.* Grotius remarks, that the Lord here invoked, is not Christ, but God, the Father; and he thinks that there is a reference to the practice of the first christians in praying over those that were newly baptised; when, as Justin Martyr mentions, their prayers were addressed only (c) to the Father, and sovereign God of the universe. How far this may be intended in the passage, you will judge. Assuredly the sacred historian cannot be supposed to speak of invoking Christ, as he is never mentioned by him throughout this book, in any degree, as the object of worship, but as being himself the servant of the Almighty.

But

(c) απονομαζῆσαι τῷ εὐνομιῳ αναγεννηθῆναι, καὶ μετανοησάτι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμαρτήματιν, τὸ τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὁλῶν καὶ διστοκίῃ Θεῷ ὀνομα'—καὶ ἐπ' ὀνομαίῳ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τῷ σταυρωθέντι ἐπὶ Πόντιῳ Πιλάτῳ, καὶ ἐπ' ὀνομαίῳ πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὃ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν προεικονεῖται τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἰσχυρὰν, ὃ φημιζόμενος λυτῆσαι. Justin Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 80.

i. e. 'The name of the Father of the universe and sovereign
 * God is invoked for the person who desires to be baptized,
 * and hath repented of his past sins:—and he is baptized
 * in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified by Pontius
 * Pilate, and in the name of the holy spirit, who foretold by
 * the prophets the things concerning Jesus.' N. B. Justin
 always distinguishes in a proper manner, the God and Father
 of the universe from Christ and all other beings, notwithstanding
 the grievous errors which he fell into and gave occasion to,
 will be seen shortly,

Acts. But perhaps, the term, *Lord*, here, rather refers to Christ, and the phrase ἐπι-καλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου, should be construed as in Acts ix. 14.—21. *acknowledging the name of the Lord*, i. e. of making open profession of Christ's religion. See L'Enfant's note upon the place, and Dr. Hammond's paraphrase of it.

xxiv. 14. *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way that they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.* St. Paul, here, in his defence before Felix the roman governor, declares that he worshiped the same God now that he was a christian, as when a jew, before his conversion. This demonstrates that the apostle knew nothing of Jesus or any other person being God, but the single person of Jehovah, the God of his fathers.

xxv. 18. *Against whom, when the accusers stood up, 19. they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.* This is produced merely to point out the general persuasion, that prevailed in the country; viz. that our Saviour was commonly spoken of, and taken to be originally, one of the human race, and not a being of a higher order.

Having

Acts xxvi. *Having obtained therefore help of God, I*

22. 23. *continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those, which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that the Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and unto the gentiles.* Paul here declares his sentiments, before king Agrippa, a jew, to be in intire agreement with those of their jewish prophets, concerning their Messiah; who was also foretold by them to be of a particular tribe and family of their nation,—that he was one that was to undergo a violent death, but would speedily be raised again to life, and become the instrument of bringing both jews and heathens to eternal life.

(d) It would be hardly worth the while to mention, had not some lately much insisted on it; that the language used here, and in some few other places, where Christ is said *to rise*, or *to have risen* from the dead, has been imagined to imply, that he raised himself to life; and that this is a proof of his divinity. But it being too great an undertaking, for one *dead*, i. e. *without*

✓ (d) N. B. The general, and almost universal stile of the sacred writers, is, that God raised Christ from the dead,

Acts. *without life*, to act; these persons have therefore had recourse to the chimerical notion of Christ being possessed of two natures or capacities, (for this last is the term lately adopted,) a human capacity and a divine capacity, and that the divine capacity raised to life the dead human capacity. But they did not consider that the same language is used concerning other dead human creatures as well as Christ. For we read 1 Theff. iv. 16. *The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.* So that according to this method of argument, the pious dead have now a power of raising themselves to life as well as Christ had, and therefore must be supposed to be possessed like him of a divine nature or capacity, by which at a proper time, they will raise to life their dead human nature or capacity. When will divines have done with these solutions of difficulties of their own making, spun out of the brains of philosophers more subtle than wise?

SECTION

SECTION IX.

Of the sum of St. Luke's testimony concerning God and Christ, in his history, called THE ACTS.

From a copious enumeration of facts, we have found, that what St. Luke advances in this his second treatise, *The Acts*, is in exact conformity with what he had related of Jesus Christ, in his gospel; that he was intirely one of the human race, and nothing more or different from others, except in the divine communications made to him. Our historian calls Mary, his mother, and other persons of his kindred, after his resurrection. And he introduces Jesus, after his exaltation into heaven, declaring himself to have been once one of mankind, not blushing to own his earthly origin, which so many of his followers are disgusted with, and offended to hear him called a human being only. St. Luke speaks of no persons as being properly divine, or God, or to be worshiped, but the single person of the sovereign Lord and creator of all things; and holds forth Jesus as his servant, brought into being by him, to promote his benevolent purposes for all mankind. And in the course of his history, which appears to have been written to give an account of the propagation of the

the

the gospel in the world after Christ's resurrection, the like sentiments of the apostles concerning these points are naturally interwoven.

This last is a circumstance of great weight, which has not been duly attended to by christians. Indeed from the memoirs of Christ, left us by the four evangelists, which pronounce so absolutely, and without reserve, as we have seen, that Jesus was the great expected prophet of the jewish nation, of a particular tribe and family, with extraordinary power from God, and nothing more; it might have been presumed, and taken for granted, that all the apostles entertained the same sentiments of their divine master. But it is a satisfaction to have that additional distinct evidence of the fact, which St. Luke gives us. I conceive it will be useful to give at once an abridged view of it, with the inferences almost intuitively deducible from it; though I may touch upon some few things observed above.

SECTION X.

Of the sentiments of the apostles, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by St. Luke in The Acts.

You will recollect, that soon after the beginning of his history, St. Luke records a discourse, wherein

wherein Peter professedly speaks in the name of all the apostles, and in which God is distinguished, as he ever must be, as the supreme author and governor of all things, and the holy Jesus is characterized as his dependent but highly favoured creature of the human race, in terms that cannot be misconstrued. *Ye men of Israel, bear these words! Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, whom by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain, hath God raised up.* Acts ii. 22.—37.

Also Acts ii. iii. When Peter and John by a word's speaking, had healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth; they informed their wondering countrymen, that the miracle was wrought by a power which they derived from Jesus, who was a man of their own nation and country, and the highly favoured servant of God, the God of their fathers. And they twice stile him God's SERVANT.

COROLLARIES,

deducible from the foregoing facts.

I.

Here is an additional proof, (see p. 25, &c.) that the apostle John does not, in the preface to his gospel,

gospel call Christ, God, or a preexistent being; since he with the rest of the apostles, in this speech of Peter's, acknowledges and declares him to have been a human being only.

Neither could John contradict himself, and assert any thing of the kind in his epistles, as indeed he does not; though some have vainly imagined and argued for it, but have often been confuted.

And if we had not otherwise the fullest evidence, that the text of the three witnesses, 1 John v. 7. is spurious; we should hence nevertheless be authorised to reject it, if it intended to teach Christ to be any other than a human creature, indued with divine powers.

II.

We have one epistle preserved of the apostle James's writing, admirably suited to correct the faults of the christians and his countrymen to whom he dedicates it; and at the same time breathing a spirit of sublime piety, and concern for their virtue and true happiness, peculiar to the sacred writers. Throughout he speaks of God and of Christ, as might be expected from a jew and an apostle. I have somewhere read, that Bugenhagius, one of the german reformers, was so struck with those words of St. James, ii. 19. *Thou believest that there is one God: thou dost well: that*
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that he said, the apostle spoke like an Ebionite (e). But he also might with truth, and the fullest evidence, have said, that all the apostles spake like Ebionites, Nazarenes, or might have given them any other antient name, which would have marked their belief, that there was but one person who was *God, even the Father*, as this apostle remarks, iii. 9. and that Jesus was the creature and honoured servant of that God, and his extraordinary messenger to mankind.

III.

The apostle Peter, after such declarations, in his own name, and in that of the other eleven apostles, that there was but one single person who was God, and that Jesus was his favoured servant, and altogether one of the human race, could not possibly contradict himself, and teach another doctrine in his epistles. Nothing indeed could be farther from his thoughts and design, as will appear

(e) *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes*, were two names for the same persons, viz. *jewish* christians, who held the divine unity in the strictest sense, and believed our Saviour to have been a man, of their own nation, their expected great prophet. The scripture-authorities exhibited in this work shew, that those who followed the doctrine of Jesus and his apostles, could not entertain any other sentiments. And Dr. Priestley has evinced this to have been the real fact, from sufficient historical evidence, in his controversy with Dr. now Bp. Horsley.

pear to every one, who impartially examines those writings. So that did not we know the power of prejudice, we might wonder how a learned man could fall into so grievous an error, as to impute to this apostle, a most strange polytheistic doctrine, expressly disavowed by him. But you, whose judgments are more unbiassed, will easily see how inconsiderate and negligent an interpreter of scripture, the present Bishop of Worcester (Dr. Hurd) shews himself in this instance, and what an injustice he does to the apostle, though without intending it. "The substance of what 'we are to believe,' says the Bishop, 'on this whole subject, is contained in a single text of St. Peter, where *The Three Divine Persons, yet essentially one God, the Trinity in Unity, whom we adore, and their respective offices, are accurately distinguished.* For in the opening of his first epistle, he pronounces the christians to whom he writes, *elect*, that is entitled to salvation, according to the foreknowledge and predetermination of God the Father, through the sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' Bishop Hurd's Sermons. Vol. ii. p. 311, &c. (f).

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We

(f) You will see in the very next verse, that the Divine Being is called *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, viz. the person to whom he owed his existence and all it's blessings

IV.

We have a very short epistle of St. Jude, who was one of our Lord's kindred; in which there is nothing different from what he, and the other apostles declared by the mouth of Peter, concerning their divine master. He has one passage indeed, which some have ignorantly misrepresented; wherein, speaking of certain false teachers of his time, St. Jude accuses them of denying *God, the only (g) sovereign, δεσπότην, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. And he probably alludes to those early corrupters of the gospel by a mistaken philosophy, who would not allow Jesus to be the Son of the creator of the world, which they maintained to have been made by an inferior less perfect being; but that Jesus was sent by the supreme God, who was perfectly good, to rectify the errors of the creator. Into such mistakes do men fall, when they leave the written

blessings; and he is also in the same place said to have raised Jesus Christ from the dead: which assuredly bespeaks Jesus to have been a mortal creature: for God cannot die. To have overlooked this, and many other similar but stronger passages of the like sort, in the epistles of this eminent disciple of Christ, must have been blameable in one who can so peremptorily declare him to be the teacher of a Trinity in Unity.—This is repeated by me here to guard you against being misled by such authorities.

(g) Dr. Doddridge gives the same turn to the translation, in his paraphrase.

written word to follow their own imaginations and prejudices.

V.

Of the other apostles, who were with our Lord in his life time, and who now joined with Peter in this prayer, we have nothing remaining in writing; but we are assured, from satisfactory evidence, as well as from what the apostle Peter here declares concerning their sentiments, that wherever they went, they would bear testimony to that grand truth of revelation, that there was but one only true God, the God of their fathers; and that Jesus was a man of their own nation, and the highly favoured servant and messenger of that God, and the teacher of his will to men.

SECTION XI.

St. Luke's record of the manner in which the gospel was first preached to the heathen world.

Acts x. You are informed at large, of Peter being expressly commissioned by Almighty God, to bring a man of rank, one of the heathen world, to the knowledge of the gospel. Now in carrying on his conversion, what does the apostle teach him? that Jesus Christ was God? or, the holy spirit, God? No such thing. But that Jesus was a man of Nazareth in Judea; and the holy ghost

or holy spirit, was the gift of divine powers, which God bestowed upon him, to qualify him to teach his will with authority to mankind; and that though he was cut off by violent and wicked instruments for his many virtues and zeal in the discharge of his great office, the Almighty had vindicated his innocence, and shewn his high estimation of him by appointing him to be the president and judge at that future day, when all those who should be found alive, and the innumerable dead, were to be called to give account of themselves.

After this opening made; Acts xiii. xiv. &c. Paul and Barnabas are, by divine appointment, sent forth by the rest of the apostles, to preach the gospel to the whole heathen world. And in their travels, for this great design, into different countries; they first acquaint them, every where, with the holy life of Jesus, a man of their own nation; his appointment from God to teach his will to the world; and his unjust death in the cause of the truth he delivered; but whom God claimed and confirmed to be his approved servant and messenger to mankind, by restoring him to life in three days. And Paul expressly informs his Athenian audience, that *the God, that made the world*, had recently manifested his will and holy laws *by the man, viz. Jesus Christ*; whom he had dignified, by appointing him to pass sentence upon mankind, at a future day, according to their actions, good or evil.

COROL.

Tutor of the Apostles Ministry.

COROLLARIES,

deducible from the foregoing facts.

I.

Whoever teaches that there is any person who is God, but the God of Israel, the living God, the God that made the world; or that Jesus Christ is any other than a human being, the highly favoured servant of God, teaches a doctrine contrary to that of the apostles, and condemned by them.

II.

St. Paul holds forth the same doctrine concerning God and Christ in his epistles, which he preached to the Athenians. And it is pointed out in this work, and has been proved by others, that his words concerning a *new creation* by Jesus Christ, and in all other places, are misunderstood and misrepresented, where any would fix a contrary meaning on them, viz. that there is any God, or creator but the single person of the Father of the universe; or that Jesus Christ is God, or any other originally than one of the human race.

III.

It has been much disputed among christians of different persuasions and opinions, whether the

epistle, that goes under the name of Barnabas, was written by Paul's companion, or by some other of that name, or by some one personating Barnabas. I confess, I rather incline to think it not written by Paul's companion. But if there be any thing in it, that speaks of Jesus Christ as preexistent, or employed in creating the world, or as any other than a human being, it would be a proof that it could not be written by the true Barnabas, who taught a different doctrine in the scriptures, in preaching Christ to the heathens, as St. Luke assures us.

Some of the christian writers, after the council of Nice, and others in our own times, who would have the holy Jesus to be God as well as man, have been much perplexed, that the apostles in their sermons to jews and gentiles, should omit all mention of Christ as God; and particularly that Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, and that Paul again at Athens, should speak of him most decisively as a man only, the creature of the living God, the creator of the world. And they have endeavoured to account for it by saying, that the apostles refrained from naming Christ as God; or teaching that there were Three Divine Persons, each of them God, lest they should thereby confirm the heathens in their idolatry; and also by alleging, that it was necessary to use great caution towards their countrymen, the jews, because that they would

This is the source of metaphysical reasonings & errors.

not

not bear to be directly told, that their messiah, a mortal man, was the supreme God (*n*).

When men find no mention made in the scriptures, where naturally it was to be expected, of a doctrine, which they think fundamental and most important, it behoves them certainly to try to discover some reason, why the apostles should take no notice of it. Others however, who do not think it right to *make* history, but to take it as they find it, will be inclined to think, that the apostles did not teach either jews or heathens, that Christ was God, because they did not believe it, but held him to be a mortal creature only, highly favoured by God; and that with respect to a *Trinity of Divine Persons*, each of them God, they appear not to have had the remotest idea of any such thing.

These persons do not consider, that it is a heavy reflection upon the gospel, as fabricated by them, that when its divine teacher came to destroy idolatry, his own doctrine should bear such affinity to it, that it must be preached with caution and reserve, for fear of encouraging heathens in the worship of their many gods.

It (*n*). Much unlearned and unworthy contradiction and opposition hath been made to Dr. Priestley, in his controversy with Bp. Horsley, on this subject, which has given him opportunity of throwing a pleasing light upon it, to the satisfaction of all who love to see curious and important facts illustrated.

It is however but too true of the christian doctrine, not as delivered by its divine author, but as his followers have corrupted, and new-modelled it, that it notoriously borders upon, and favours idolatry; and this is known to be the grand stumbling-block in the way of jews, mahometans, and deists; which prevents all examination of the christian scriptures, because they think, but very erroneously, that they teach this polytheistic doctrine.

SECTION XII.

The worship of the truly primitive church, made up of the apostles and their friends, as recorded by St. Luke in THE ACTS.

407.
Chapm.

The Acts was one of the last written books of the New Testament, and carries down the state of things in the christian church, till within a few years of the destruction of Jerusalem. After which, there is a great chasm, for forty years, in the history of our religion. One cannot therefore but reflect with peculiar satisfaction, that we have a pattern of divine worship, in which all the apostles joined, preserved to us by St. Luke; because this will be a model, to which we can conform with full satisfaction; and from a comparison with it, we may be able to judge, how far our own devotions are directed

directed to their right object. It is contained in Acts iv. 23.—30. And the Great God is there addressed in the singular number, and with the pronoun *thou*, which absolutely denotes one Person only, and excludes every other. It is recorded that *they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Sovereign lord, THOU art the God, who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is!* And, in their prayer, they twice stile Jesus, the *holy servant* of the God they worship.

COROLLARIES,

deducible from the foregoing account.

I.

The sovereign lord of all, and God of the apostles, the God of christians, is not composed of Three Persons, but is One Person only.

II.

Jesus Christ is not the God of christians, but the *holy servant* of the God whom the apostles worshiped, and whom alone all christians are to worship.

III.

They, who, besides this God, the sovereign lord and creator of all things, worship two other Persons,

Persons, whom they call *God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*, do not conform to the example of the apostles, nor worship the God whom they worshiped.

IV.

All the jewish christians were Unitarians. They could not possibly be different, who were taught by the apostles. And the accounts that remain of these first jewish christians confirm this fact, as Dr. Priestley hath abundantly evinced against the unbecoming cavils of his opponents, Mr. Badcock and Bishop Horsley.

V.

All the gentile christians were at first Unitarians; for they received the gospel from the apostles and other jewish christians. And common unlearned christians continued to be Unitarians, for several centuries. But the learned among them soon began to corrupt the true doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, by making him a person that preexisted, and who was an inferior God, and employed by the father of the universe in making the world, before he became man; and at length, by converting him into the supreme God, as he is looked upon by

by many unto this day. How this fatal defection from the truth first began, is shewn in the following chapter of this work.

VI.

All christians who would conform to the sentiments, worship and practice of the apostles, must be unitarians: that is, they must pray to and worship the single Person of Jehovah, the Father of the universe, the only true God; and consider, respect and honour Jesus Christ, as his holy servant, and messenger to mankind, once their fellow-mortal, but now worthily exalted, and appointed to be the future judge at that day, when the whole race of mankind shall have different allotments of happiness or misery, according as they have done good or evil in the world.

VII.

Some christians, in former time, and lately, not finding that Christ was looked upon as any thing more than a man in his life-time, have taken upon them to say that his divinity began to be displayed at his resurrection. But they are to be reminded, that the foregoing conclusions are drawn from the words and practice of his apostles, after his resurrection and ascension into heaven; and that their
vain

vain imagination, for no better name can it deserve, is confuted by our Lord's first act recorded, immediately on his being raised again to life; viz. the message which he sent to his desponding disciples, in which he declares himself a creature of the human race, and that he had the same God and kind author of his being, and all its blessings, in common with them: *Go to my brethren, says he to Mary Magdalen, and tell them; I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and unto my God, and your God.* John xx.

IT IS TO BE HOPED, that the demonstration is now made fully compleat, and evident to every understanding: from the four sacred historians of our Lord's life, and from the history of the propagation of his religion after his death and resurrection by St. Luke; THAT the apostles of Jesus, did not know, or worship any other God, or teach that there was any other God to be worshiped, but the single person of Jehovah, the supreme lord of all, the God of their fathers, the parent and sole creator of all things;

THAT Jesus Christ in his life-time, and after his ascension into heaven, declared himself to be one of the human race:

THAT ALL his apostles bear testimony to him as being a man of their own nation, a divine prophet, whose existence began when he was born of his mother Mary, a jewess:

And

And

AND THAT he was brought into being, and qualified in an extraordinary manner, to reform the world sunk in vice and ignorance, and to teach them virtue, and the knowledge and worship of the one only living and true God, in opposition to prevailing idolatry, and to the worship of any other than the single person of Jehovah, the Father and sole creator of all things.

These ends have in a certain degree, been attained, through the preaching of the gospel. For a large portion of the world hath been greatly enlightened and reformed by it, compared with their former heathen state. And although christians, in process of time, corrupted their religion and fell into an idolatry similar to that of their heathen ancestors, and worshiped Jesus Christ as the eternal God, which still continues among the greater part of them : this polytheism is manifestly wearing out in many christian countries, particularly in our own ; and is giving way to right sentiments of the Divine Unity, and of the worship of the Father alone, which the blessed Jesus recommended and practised. And if the many, who are convinced of this great truth, could be prevailed with to recommend it by their own example and practice, which is their duty, the whole world, in no long space of time, would become Unitarians, worshipers of the Father, the only true God.

CHAPTER II.

*Of the ORIGIN of the great errors concerning
Jesus Christ.*

SECTION I.

*Of the first corruption of the true doctrine concerning
Jesus Christ, in the time of the apostles.*

IT is painful to have cause to observe, that very strange errors, respecting the person of Christ, took place even whilst some of the apostles were alive: the effects of which remain to this hour.

For coeval with the very first preaching of the gospel, there were learned and speculative men that embraced it, who, out of a desire of exalting the character of its founder, and through the prepossessions of a false philosophy, and notions of impurity in whatsoever was connected with *matter*, would not allow our Saviour to have been a suffering

fering mortal creature, like themselves; but contented that he was man only in appearance (a): and as to the assertions of his apostles to the contrary, who were unlearned men, and not acquainted with science, they seem not to have regarded their testimony in this respect, though they paid a deference to it in others. That this was the light in which these men considered the apostles, may be gathered from what St. John says of them in his epistles; where we find, that they

(a) It is against these philosophical corrupters of the true doctrine concerning Christ, that St. John directs a large part of his two first epistles. Polycarp, who is said to have been the disciple of our apostle, thus censures the same men; *'For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is Antichrist: And whosoever does not confess his suffering upon the cross, is from the devil.'* But Ignatius, who was cotemporary and acquainted with Polycarp, describes their error concerning Christ more particularly, and exclaims thus loudly against them: *'Stop your ears therefore, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ, of the race of David, by the virgin Mary: Who was truly born, did eat and drink; was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was also truly crucified and dead:—Who was truly raised from the dead by his Father, after the same manner as he (the Father) will also raise up us who believe in him, by Christ Jesus: without whom we have no true life.'* I make use of Archbishop Wake's translation. p. 92. 151: N. B. There is no fact better established in christian antiquity, than that the first error, or heresy, as it is called, concerning Jesus Christ, was this, in not allowing him to have been really a human being, like the rest of us.

still continued in the profession of christianity, and maintained their peculiar doctrine, notwithstanding the most express condemnation of it by the apostle. For this remark I am indebted to Dr. Priestley.

To this wild and fanciful doctrine of these philosophizing christians, the apostle John, in his two first epistles, opposes, as well he might, his own experience concerning his lord and master Jesus; the testimony of his senses, all the testimony necessary, or that could be given, that he was really a human being, and no phantom; that the man Jesus was himself the Christ; and that it was the characteristic mark of a true believer, to own, that Jesus, who came with a divine authority from God, was really one of the human race. 1 John i. 1.—3. iv. 2. ii. 22. But on this point there is no need to dwell at present. Thus early however, you see, was laid the ground of the false doctrine of a preexistence of Christ, and also of his being composed, as it became afterwards called, of two natures: both the one and the other, in direct opposition to the declaration of the apostle.

That part of these men's notion, that Christ was man in appearance only, a phantom, soon died away, not being able to stand such direct assertion of an apostle to the contrary. But it was not so with the other branch of it, his preexistence, equally at the same time reprobated and condemned by the apostle; who maintains, that our Lord was
really

really a mortal man, a human creature. Science; falsely so called, as St. Paul well characterizes it, prevailed against the scriptures, and converted the blessed Jesus into a different person from what his apostles declared him to have been. How this was brought about, it is my present purpose to explain.

SECTION II.

Of the corruption of the true doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, by Justin Martyr.

In perusing the scriptures of the Old Testament, we find them uniformly describing GOD, as one single person: who created and governs the world by himself alone, without any other divine person employed by, or acting for, and under him.

The personal pronouns—I, thou, he, me, thee, him, constantly used therein, by prophets and holy men, when the Divine Being is introduced speaking himself, or when addressed, or spoken of; are a demonstration of the divine unity, without any trinity or plurality of persons; which cannot be resisted.

Our Saviour Christ, in the New Testament, uses invariably the same language, in characterizing the Deity; and never lets fall the least word, that there was any person but one, Jehovah, the Fa-

they, who was God and creator, either original or subordinate; least of all, that he himself was the one or the other, or any thing more than one of the human race, and a divine and extraordinary messenger and prophet.

In this state of things, and total silence of the hebrew and christian scriptures, concerning any God or creator, but Jehovah, the Father, there steps forth, not more than thirty years after the death of the apostle John, one of the first of the fathers, as they are styled, after those called apostolic, *Justin* by name, a heathen philosopher of great integrity, and a sincere seeker after truth, who had lately become a disciple of Christ; and he takes upon him to maintain, that there was another (*b*) God of christians, an inferior God, who ministered to the will and designs of the Father and Maker of all things, in his work of creation and government.

(*b*) The christians, mentioned in the former section, whom St. John opposes in his epistles, who denied Christ to have been a suffering mortal, dividing Jesus from the Christ, held the preexistence of this imaginary Christ of their's; but speculated no farther, said nothing of his divinity.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Whence it was, that Justin Martyr brought into christianity his new doctrine of Christ being the logos, the Word, an inferior God and creator.

From what source Justin drew this notion, it will not be difficult to trace. In one place, giving in a pleasing manner, his own history, he mentions, that after having adjoined himself to the several schools of the philosophers that were in repute, without finding satisfaction, he at last fixed with the Platonists (c), as promising the knowlege of what he so earnestly coveted. And he fails not to tell us, what indeed continually appears in his writings, how warmly he was attached

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(c) This is in his dialogue with Trypho the jew: concerning which there have been doubts, whether it took place really, as he relates it: or the whole was feigned by him, in Plato's manner, thereby to have opportunity, in a more agreeable way, to make known his extraordinary insight into the hebrew scriptures, and the grand discovery he had made in them, as he supposed.

It seems more probable, that he had some personal intercourse with the jew upon the subject; but that the conversation had received great embellishment and improvements from Justin afterwards. Justin. Op. p. 103.

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to Plato's doctrines; some of which he fancied to resemble the gospel; and which might be among the things, that first induced him to think favourably of it.

Being of this sect, when he embraced the christian faith, it was natural for him to be desirous of accommodating his new religion to it; and particularly to endeavour to aggrandize the character of its divine author, the blessed Jesus, of whose mean worldly figure, and ignominious death, though nobly suffering in the cause of God, philosophy had from the first, and has always been ashamed. And as Justin is the first christian, that we know of, who attributed divinity to Christ, in making him the *logos*; the *word*, the wisdom of God, we can have little doubt of his having borrowed the notion from the platonic doctrine concerning the deity, and certain divine emanations, or persons, proceeding from him, (*d*), of which the *logos* was one.

But
(*d*): Μάλα ταῦτα χριστιανοὶ ἠγάπησιν, ὡς σοφίζονται, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ
τῷ θεῷ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἀνολογῶν. Καὶ οὕτως οἱ χριστιανοὶ τὸ ἔχοντα,
αὐτοὶ λόγοι ἐπαγγελῶμενοι θεοὶ εἶναι τῷ θεῷ, ἀποδοικόμενοι λόγοι καὶ
θεοὶ καὶ ἅγιος, ἀλλὰ ἀνθρώποι ἀνθρώπων ἀπαχθῆναι καὶ ἀποδοικόμενοι
θεοὶ. i. e. "After this, Celsus takes upon him to censure
the christians for arguing sophistically, when they say, that
the Son of God is the *Word* himself: and he thinks his
accusation against us is fully justified, because after main-
taining the Son of God to be the *Word*, we do not exhibit
him

But we are not left to mere conjecture, that it was Justin who imported into christianity the notion of Christ being a divine person, and who was employed in the creation of the world. For in his apology for the christians, he informs the emperors, Antoninus Pius, and his adopted sons, M. Aurelius, L. Verus; to whom he addresses it, that (e) 'he had been long convinced himself, and that they might also on inquiry find, that Plato had learned from Moses, and agreed with him in asserting, that the universe was made by the word of God.'

Nevertheless I apprehend that we shall find, upon more exact and impartial inquiry, that Plato did not learn this doctrine from Moses; but that Justin, out of an undue fondness for his former master, made the heathen philosopher borrow it from

him a pure and holy *Word*, but a mortal creature, most infamously led away as a malefactor, to be crucified." Origen. contra Celsum. lib. ii. p. 79. Ed. Cantab. 1677.

Celsus was a cotemporary of Justin's; and this shews, that the philosophers, one of whom Justin had been, held the *logos*, the *Word*, not to be God, but an emanation from him. See Justin op. p. 81, and elsewhere, how familiar the term *logos*, the *Word*, was with him.

(e) After citing Gen. i. 1. &c; Justin observes; *οτι λογω Θεω, εκ των υποκειμενων και προδηλωθεντων δια Μωσιν, γεγενησθαι τον παλαια κοσμον; και Πλατων, και οι ταυτα λεγοντες, και ημεις μαθεμεν, και υμεις πιστευειν δυνασθε.* Id. Ibid. p. 78.

from the jewish lawgiver, and thus introduced a new secondary God and creator into the christian system, who continues to be worshiped by the greater part, to this day. How he contrived to support this most extraordinary doctrine, I go on to consider more minutely than I have found it hitherto attempted; not for any peculiar strength in the arguments of this pious, mistaken heathen convert, but because he has been copied by most other christians since, both arians and athanasians, if I may so call them, though certainly without any intended reproach: who having adopted Plato's reveries, and made Jesus Christ a preexistent God and creator, were interested to provide for him some part to act in the Old Testament, and a place in the sacred history from the creation to the christian era; where no Israelite however or jew could ever discover him. For it would have been most unaccountable, and been much against their new doctrine, to have introduced Christ as the maker of the world, and to have had nothing for him to do for the creatures he had made, till he came among them, a mortal man, to die for them.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

Of Justin's manner of proving Christ to have been an inferior God, and creator of the world, under the supreme Father of all.

It is in his dialogue with Trypho the jew, that we have his way of arguing upon the subject. You find, however, from the words of Trypho, and from Justin's own confession, that the jews at that time had no idea, that the Messiah, whom they expected, was to be any other than a human being; and (f) *that it was to them a thing unheard of, and the height of folly, to suppose him to have preexisted before the ages, as a God, and to have submitted afterwards to have been born, and to become man.* These things however Justin undertakes to prove. But his proofs will be found void of all support from scripture, and intirely the produce of his own imagination and prejudices.

(f) το γαρ λεγειν σι, παρουπαρχαι θεον ολια προ αιωνων τειλα τον χριστον, ολια και γεννηθηναι ανθρωπον γενομενον υπομοινασαι, και ελι εν ανθρωπος εξ ανθρωπου· η μωρον παραδοξον δοκει μοι ειπαι, αλλα και μωρον.
Justin. Op. p. 143. 144.

SECTION

SECTION V.

Justin's way of proving Christ to have been concerned in the creation of the world.

Upon Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man in our own image*: 'lest it should be thought,' says Justin to Trypho, 'as your jewish doctors are wont to allege, that this phrase implies nothing more than God's speaking to himself; as we are often used to say, let us do such a thing, when we do not intend to address any other person: I shall corroborate my interpretation of it, that it is an address to another person, and to a rational being, with whom God discoursed, from Gen. iii. 22. *And the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us*: for the phrase, *as one of us*, manifestly denotes a number of persons concerned, two at least. For it cannot be proved, that God spoke to angels, as your doctors assert, or that the human body is the work of angels. But it was his own offspring, produced from the Father, who was with the Father before any thing was made, with whom God here conversed; as Solomon has declared, speaking of him under the name of Wisdom (g).'

We

We shall shortly see, what little countenance in the passage alluded to, Solomon gives this philosophical conceit of there being another divine person, who was an assistant to the Almighty, in creating the world (*b*).

But there is no ground whatever from the sacred writings, for Justin to allege the authority of Moses, for the supreme Being speaking in this place to an inferior God or creator; when Moses, neither here, nor in any part of his writings, mentions the existence of any such subordinate creator, and when he at no time speaks of any but one single person, as God and creator.

If the Divine Being is not represented here as addressing the angels, supposed by the Israelites to be always attendant upon him, when he said, *let us make man*, or, *man is become as one of us*; why may we not take the plural number to be used

(*b*) Marcellus, the unitarian bishop of Ancyra, says, that it was 'his word, his reason, as he goes on afterwards to explain himself by a familiar example, to which God spake, when he said, *let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness*: there being no other God to be a fellow-creature with him. For God says, (Isaiah xlv. 6.) *I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God*. There is therefore no younger God, nor any God besides, who could be a fellow-worker with God.'—*ὁ ὁσος ἄλλος θεὸς συμπλάττει πῶλον δυναμίν.* Εγὼ γὰρ εἶμι, φησὶ θεός, πῶλος, ———. *ὡς ἐν κελύφῃ τις θεός ἐστιν, ὡς ἄλλος τις πῶλος τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς; θεὸς συνπλαττει δυνάμις.* Euseb. contra Marcellum p. 41.

used by the sacred historian, for the sake of distinction and dignity, when describing God about to create man, his only rational production here below? But see p. 289—293 of my former Address to you.

There is no end of mens fancies and suppositions on these occasions, to make the scripture bend to the particular notions they have espoused: but most assuredly, had Moses been apprized of the existence of any such inferior god and creator, he would have directly and explicitly told his countrymen of it; and not have described him in such an ambiguous manner, that none of them have ever found it out to this hour; not one of their prophets before Christ. Moses's silence and theirs, shews, that neither he, nor they believed, that there was any such secondary God, as Justin finds in his writings.

SECTION VI.

Justin's way of proving Christ to have been the Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre.

Gen. xviii. 1. 2. &c. *And the LORD appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him:*

him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, my lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant, &c. &c.

In this chapter, there is a manifestation of the divine presence, attended by three angels, in the shape of men, who appear to Abraham, and are entertained by him. Justin will have one of these to be superior to the others, and to be, by way of eminence, the prime angel or messenger of the divine will, an inferior God under the supreme creator of all things, and bearing the title of Jehovah (*b*).

His assertion is first built on there being two Jehovahs, mentioned, Gen. xix. 24: one of which he supposes to denote this subordinate God, who afterwards became man. But under the next head, it will be seen, that this discovery of two Jehovahs, in this place, is owing to a grammatical mistake of this worthy person.

It is evident also, that throughout the visionary scene, the Divine Being is plainly distinct from the three angels, his attendants. And certainly, no one would ever have presumed one of these angels to have been such a singular being different from the others, unless he had come to the reading

(i) Justin. Op. 151. &c.

ing of the history with such a notion already infused into him: for Moses gives no clue to lead to it.

Moreover, had any one of these three, that were now feasted by Abraham, been an inferior God, and an instrument in making the world, who afterwards became the man Christ Jesus; the apostle Paul, when alluding to this part of their sacred history, would not have said, Heb. xiii. 2. that *some entertained angels unawares*, but that they *entertained Christ himself*: because this would have made more for his argument, and design, in writing his epistle; which was to dispose his countrymen to receive Jesus as the Christ, their Messiah.

SECTION VII.

Justin's way of proving Christ to have been one of two Jehovahs, whom he supposes to have been engaged in the destruction of Sodom.

Justin triumphs much in the proof here afforded, Gen. xix. 24. as he (k) supposes, of there being two distinct persons, who are each of them God; upon the express authority of Moses. But justice should be done to him, in observing, that he is here, and at all times, most careful to preserve a due subordination between

(k) Justin. Op. 152. 154. 222.

tween them. For of this second God of his own device, whom he makes afterwards to become man, "I affirm," says he (l), 'that never any thing was done by him, but what the creator of the world, above whom there is no other God, directed him both to do and to say.'

But had he attended to the proper meaning of the words of the sacred historian, and not brought his two Gods along with him in his own imagination, he would not have found here more than one. For it is a mere idiom of the language (m), to repeat the noun twice instead of using the pronoun; the Lord from the Lord, instead of the Lord from himself; and this is all that he has here to build his notion upon, of there being two Lords. To have given the true sense, it ought

(l) *οθεν γαρ φημι αυτον υπαρχειν πωλε, η απαρ αυτος ο του κοσμου ποιησας, υπαρ ον αλλος εν ες θεος, βασιλευς και παρχει και εμελυσαι.* Justin Martyr, Op. p. 152.

(m) See 1 Kings viii. 1. xii. 21. Dan. ix. 17. 2 Tim. i. 18. Hof. i. 7. In the two last instances, how much more justly would the sense of the sacred writers be given, by translating, in the first; *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy before him in that day*, instead of that awkward phraseology, *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*; and in the other, *I will save them by myself*, instead of *I will save them by the Lord their God*? especially as the present improper translation leads many in our day, to suppose Christ to be the Lord God, here intended by the prophet. See also 1 Sam. 3:21. 1 Kings 12:21.

Justin should hence be styled an Arian.

113.

See Christ
Discourse
p. 128.

to have been translated; *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from himself out of heaven.* So the excellent Castellio renders it in his old french version; "E le Seigneur fit plouvoir sur Sodome et Gomorre, souphre e feu, de soi du ciel (n)."

The christian writers after Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, &c. copied blindly this egregious mistake of his. Some few indeed ventured in those times to publish their dissent with their reasons, such as we now give; but it was too plausible an argument for those that wished to exalt the character of Christ to give up; and the greater number carried it. In the council of Sirmium, about the middle of the fourth century, they proceeded so far as to make this decree against those of the contrary sentiment; 'If any one shall interpret, *the Lord* 'rained from the Lord, of his raining from himself, and not of the Father and the Son, let him be anathema.'

The arian as well as athanasian christians and commentators, all who have been desirous of making Christ exist before he was born in Judea, have followed the croud, and imagined that

(n) M. de Sacy's translation is still perhaps more proper; Le Seigneur repandit sur Sodome et Gomorre, une pluie de soufre et de feu, qu'il fit descendre du ciel. *To be the*

very same God. "from the Lord himself from the Heaven rained sulphur & fire upon Sodom & Gomorrah."

that they found Christ in this passage. Mr. Pyle, the friend of Dr. Clarke, thus paraphrases it. 'The *λογος*, the *Word* or *Son* of God, the *representative* and *agent* of the Father, executed the vengeance of Jehovah, the Father, upon these people.' Justin might teach him and Dr. Clarke, this doctrine; but assuredly not Moses.

SECTION VIII.

Justin's way of proving Christ to have been the Jehovah, who appeared to Jacob at Luz.

Genesis xxviii. 11.—19.

The LORD, Jehovah, here appears to Jacob in a vision, and promises him his protection and blessing.

But in a subsequent vision, Gen. xxxi. 11—13. where the same person appears again, it is said, *the angel of God spake unto him in a dream, &c.* From which Justin infers (*o*), that in both places, it was not God himself, the creator of the universe; who appeared; but his substitute, who is called, and who he affirms, really is, the angel, the messenger of the creator of the universe, on account of his carrying to mankind the commands of the father and maker of all things.

But

(*o*) Justin. Op. 156. &c.

But Justin is here misled by his inattention to and ignorance of the language of the scripture. For the term, *angel of God*, does not always signify one of that superior class of heavenly beings, who are mentioned as employed on messages by him. It stands also for various other things animate and inanimate, made use of by the Almighty, in his government of the world, and in the manifestation of his will and designs, to the human race. And in the present case, the *extraordinary dream was the angel of God*; by which he spoke to Jacob. But this matter will receive more particular illustration, in our review of Justin's next proof.

SECTION IX.

Justin's way of proving Christ to have been the Jehovah, who appeared to Moses, and called himself, the God of Abraham, &c.

Exodus iii. 1.—6. 1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire,

fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush; and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here am I. 5. And he said, draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground. 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Although it is here said, ver. 2. *that the angel of the LORD appeared in a flame of fire, &c.* yet as it immediately follows, ver. 4, *when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush;* this demonstrates, that whatever is to be understood by the phrase, *angel of the Lord*, it was the LORD, Jehovah, God himself, that was the person present who appeared, and spoke: for no other meaning can be justly assigned to the words. And also to the single person of Jehovah, God alone, as present, must be applied what follows, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, &c.* Let any one read the whole, without prejudice, and he will be persuaded it cannot be interpreted otherwise.

SECTION X.

Of Justin's ignorance, and mistake, in respect of the phrase, angel of God, angel of Jehovah.

But Justin maintains (*p*), that because what appeared to Moses, is called *the angel of Jehovah*, and it is immediately added, that Jehovah spoke to him, and the same Jehovah also said, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob*; that this could not be the creator of the universe, the God over whom there is no other, because it could not be said of him, that he was an angel or messenger; but that it was the same, whom, he imagines, he had before proved to have appeared to Abraham, and to Jacob; (but wherein we have shewn him to have been sadly mistaken) an inferior god, ministering and subservient to the creator of the universe; whom he supposes afterwards to have become man.

His great error about this matter here, and in other places, arose from his bringing such a second god with him out of his philosophy; and from his eager desire to find him in the bible; which prevented his attending to the phraseology
of

(*p*) Justin. Op. p. 157-

of the scriptures concerning the Divine Being's manifestations of himself to mankind.

For he presumed; (and he has been from the first, and is still copied therein by others, to this hour :) Justin took it up as a thing not to be questioned, that whenever the angel of Jehovah, or angel of God is mentioned in the scriptures, a heavenly being, a spirit of superior order, is to be understood; whereas, besides this common acceptance, the term *angel* has other very important significations.

‘In the stile of prophecy,’ that I may adopt the words of a most valuable writer, skilled in the scripture language above many, ‘every thing is called an angel that notifies a message from God, or executes the will of God. A prophetic dream is an angel; the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites, is called God’s angel. The winds and flames of fire are angels to us, when used by God, as voices to teach us, or rods to punish us. So that God is properly said to reveal by his angel, what he makes known, either by voice, by dream, by vision, or any other manner of true prophetic revelation.’ Lowman on Revelation. i. 1.

Thus Psalm civ. 4. *winds and fire* are stiled God’s *angels* and *ministers*.

2 Kings xix. 35. *The angel of the Lord*, that went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians

*sumyel
Lamin*

an hundred fourscore and five thousand, is in Iſaiah xxxvii. 6. 7. called a *blast*; and was moſt probably a hot peſtilential wind, frequent in thoſe parts. *See Lowth & Harmer.*

1 Chron. xxi. 14—16. A peſtilence, which the Lord ſent upon Iſrael, is emblematically ſignified by the name of a *deſtroying angel* (q).

Acts xii. 21. *The angel of the Lord* is by the ſacred hiſtorian interpreted to be the diſtemper, with which Herod was ſuddenly viſited.

And

(q) John v. 4. *For an angel went down at the ſeaſon into the bath, and troubled the water. Whoſoever then firſt after the troubling of the water ſtepped in, was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had.* 'It is not ſaid, that any angel was ſeen: but every thing, which had a divine effect, was, in the jewiſh way of ſpeaking, ſaid to be done by thoſe *miniſtring ſpirits*, the angels; of which 2 Kings xix. 35. and Matt. xxviii. 2. may be reckoned inſtances.' Bp. Pearce.

I would beg leave to obſerve, that ſome may ſee cauſe to doubt, whether there was in reality any healing virtue in theſe waters at all, of the very extraordinary kind deſcribed, ſo that one perſon only was healed who happened firſt to ſtep into them, and no other to be benefited at the time.

It may rather perhaps be a common ſtory, and the thing generally reported to have taken place at that feſtival; which the apoſtle recounts, as it was delivered to him. As to the miracle wrought by our Lord, in curing the man by a word's ſpeaking, it had no connection at all, with the healing virtue of theſe waters, whether real or imaginary.

And thus in the present instance; the fire in the bush that remained unconsumed, together with the supernatural articulate voice, were the *angel of the Lord*; by which the Divine Being manifested his extraordinary presence, and will to Moses; and not any second, inferior God, personating him, and acting in his name.

SECTION XI.

Of Justin's additional proof, that it could not be the Almighty Being himself, who appeared to Moses.

Justin, in the place above, adds another satisfactory reason as he thinks, why it could not be the Almighty Being himself who appeared to Moses; 'because (r), says he, no one, who was 'not intirely out of his mind, would ever assert, 'that the creator and father of the universe. 'could leave the supercelestial mansions, and 'make his abode in a small corner of the earth.'

But he did not reflect, how justly it might be retorted upon him, as a mark of his own weakness, and narrow thoughts of the infinite, eternal God, to suppose it possible for him to be so confined to any one part, as not to be present and

L. 4

attentive

(r) Justin. Op. p. 157.

attentive to every part of the universe, which he has made.

Justin also did not see his inconsistency, nor consider, how directly he contradicted the apostle, by this fancy of his philosophy, in making Christ an inferior God, who personated the supreme, and appeared to the patriarchs, and to Moses; when it is most plainly declared by St. Paul, Hebrews i. 1. &c. that *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son:* thereby expressly excluding Christ from having ministered to God, or having had any commission from him, till his public ministry began in Judea, in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius, when he was about thirty years of age. Luke iii. 1. 22, 23,

SECTION XII.

Of Justin's way of proving to the emperors, that it was Christ, and not the supreme Being himself, who appeared to Moses,

Our author, in his first apology, after having mentioned as a thing quite certain, this heathen device of his own, that it was Christ and not the Divine Being himself, that appeared to Moses,
goes

goes on very frankly to tell the princes, to whom he addresses himself (J); 'All jews, however,' says he, 'do not allow that it was Christ, but rather the God, whose name is ineffable, who spoke to Moses. But, for this, the prophetic spirit, by the abovementioned prophet, thus rebukes them; (Isa. i. 3.) *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* And Jesus Christ also reproves them, for not knowing who the Father, and who the Son was; when he says, Matt. xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Father, but the Son; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*'

It is obvious here to remark, that the emperors would not be likely to think better of the gospel, by being told, that jews and christians could not agree about the God, of whom their sacred books spoke. But if they had been capable of reading their books, they would not have thought very favourably of Justin's understanding in the present instance; as they would have easily seen how wretchedly he was mistaken in his interpretation of them. For in the former instance, the prophet Isaiah had no thought of Christ, nor referred to any thing relating to him, but speaks merely of the sottish ignorance and impiety of his countrymen, at the time that he wrote. And

in

(J) Justin. Op. p. 81.

in the passage produced from St. Matthew, our Saviour is by no means passing censure upon any, for their not acknowledging him to have been an inferior God that appeared to Moses: nothing could be more foreign to the occasion, or to his design. But he is making a solemn declaration of his mission and powers from God, and alleging; that the Father of the universe had communicated to him all things concerning the salvation of mankind and the bringing of them to eternal life, which had never been made known to any prophet but himself; *viz. No one knoweth the Father but the Son*; and moreover, which no one could come to the knowledge of but by a communication from him, who had been thus favoured of God; *viz. neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

SECTION XIII.

Of Justin's way of proving Solomon to speak concerning Christ, in Proverbs viii.

The description of Divine Wisdom by Solomon, being appealed to by Justin, as his prime evidence for the preexistence of Christ, and applied to him as such; it must not pass unnoticed.

I shall

‘ I shall bring another testimony from the
 ‘ scripture, my friends,’ says Justin (*t*), in his
 dialogue with Trypho and some other jews ; ‘ that
 ‘ in the beginning, before his works of creation,
 ‘ God produced from himself a certain rational
 ‘ principle, power, *δυναμιν*, which is differently
 ‘ stiled by the holy spirit, sometimes the glory of
 ‘ the Lord, the Son, at other times wisdom, an
 ‘ angel, at others God, the Lord, the word ;
 ‘ sometimes he calleth himself (*u*) captain : for
 ‘ he has all these appellations, from his ministring
 ‘ to the will of the Father, and from having been
 ‘ brought into being by his will.—The word of
 ‘ *Wisdom*,’ continues he, ‘ shall testify for me,
 ‘ *the God*, who was brought into being by the
 ‘ Father of the universe, who is the word, wif-
 ‘ dom, power, glory, of him who brought him
 ‘ into being, and who thus speaks by Solomon,
 Prov. viii. 22.—31. *The LORD possessed me in
 the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
 before ever the world was. When there were no
 depths,*

(*t*) Justin. Op. 157. 158.

(*u*) Justin alludes to Josh. v. 13. &c. where there is a
 vision, or manifestation of the divine presence, exhibited by
 the appearance of a captain with a drawn sword, calling him-
 self, *a captain of the host of Jehovah*. But there is nothing to
 mark out Christ, or any other but God himself ; and particu-
 larly, since in continuation of the same vision, as it seems, vi. 2.
 the history says, *And the Lord (Jehovah) said unto Jo-*
shua, &c.

depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the earth: when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

1. But Solomon will be found to give no more countenance to Justin's or rather Plato's secondary and subordinate God and creator, than Moses.

And in the first place, since he never in any other part of his writings, speaks of any such great being, distinct from God, we may naturally and justly understand him here, which has been noted above p. 29. as describing the Almighty under his attribute of wisdom, represented as a person always with him, and his delight, (by a figure of speech usual with the sacred and other esteemed moral writers,) to teach and impress the reader in a more lively and forcible manner, that the world was made and is governed by the most perfect wisdom,

2. If

2. If there had really been such a divine person, so nearly related to mankind, as to have been their maker, and governor, under God, and Solomon had known it, he would not have contented himself with intimating it in such an obscure ambiguous manner, but would have mentioned it frequently and plainly; nay, as was said before of Moses, it would have been his duty to have told it, he would have been inexcuseable in the omission.

But we meet with nothing of the kind. In his solemn prayer at the dedication of the temple, where it might have been a proper place to have taken notice of so great a being, next to the eternal, with whom they were so intimately concerned, if there had been any such; there is no God named but one, Jehovah, acting by himself alone, hearing prayer, and forgiving the sins of his penitent creatures; in language so distinct and expressive of the divine unity, so exclusive of Christ or any other person, as is impossible to misconstrue or evade.

C O R O L L A R Y.

From the foregoing particular examination of Justin's arguments, and their turning out so weak and insufficient, we are constrained to make this general inference; that his notion of Christ being
a second

a second inferior God, ministring to the supreme Father of the universe, in his works of creation and government, is the fiction of a warm fancy, derived from Plato's philosophy, and thence obtruded by him upon the sacred writings; Moses and Solomon having been shewn to have been totally ignorant of any such subordinate god, of any person but one, being God, and the creator and governor of the world.

And as Moses, the divine lawgiver of the jews, knew nothing of their messiah, Christ, being to be any thing but a man of their nation, who was to be born in some future time; we might conclude, from this circumstance only, had we not numberless arguments besides, that St. John in his gospel could not treat of Christ as being the logos, the Word, a God of any sort concerned in the creation of all things, when Moses confessedly was a stranger to the existence of any such person, in his history of the creation.

SECTION

SECTION XIV.

Of the cause of Justin's asserting in so very positive and peremptory a stile, that Christ was the agent of the Deity at the creation of the world, and in his government of it afterwards.

It has been made evident in the above instances, and might be shewn in all others of the kind, produced by Justin, that he is intirely mistaken in his explanation of the scriptures of the old Testament, and in his application of them to Christ; and also that Moses and Solomon, from whose writings he would extract his notions, were wholly unacquainted with there being any such inferior God and creator, as he makes them speak so familiarly of; never naming, or appearing to know of any other than one person, who was God, and creator.

In the meanwhile, we are surprized with the very positive tone, with which this good man delivers himself. He speaks as if all he said upon the subject, was demonstration, and incapable of being confuted; and treats the jews he converses with, as mere cyphers, and totally ignorant of their own scriptures, for not giving immediate credit to his interpretation of them.

How many modern Justins have we? We

We should have been at a loss to account for his taking up such a conceit in such a high manner, if he himself had not given us a clue for it. And the real solution of the matter is, that Justin was under a delusion, vainly imagining, that he had a supernatural insight given him into the meaning of the sacred writings, in this respect.

In one place, immediately before he delivers his explanation of the divine appearance to Jacob, he says to the jews (*w*); ‘ I shall tell you plain
‘ fact, without any art, or embellishment of words,
‘ for which I have no talent. But it hath pleased
‘ God, of his especial favour, to impart to me the
‘ gift of understanding his scriptures. And of
‘ this his grace to me, I call upon all to partake
‘ freely and without reward; lest, for not communicating so great a benefit to others, I should
‘ myself be condemned, in the judgment which
‘ the creator of the world will exercise by our
‘ Lord Jesus Christ.’

In the same dialogue with Trypho, p. 195. After citing Matt. xi. 27. *All things are delivered to me of the Father: and no man knoweth the Father but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and they to whom the Son shall reveal him.* ‘ To us,
‘ therefore,’ continues he, ‘ hath he revealed all
‘ these things, which by his special gift we have
‘ learned from the scriptures; in that we have
‘ been

(*w*) Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 154.

+ So says Mr. Huntington] &c.

‘been brought to the knowlege of his being the
 ‘first born of God, and before all the creatures;
 ‘and at the same time the son of the patriarchs, in-
 ‘asmuch as he was descended from them, by a
 ‘virgin of their race, and became an ordinary mor-
 ‘tal, exposed to ignominy and suffering.’

‘And towards the end of his dialogue, Justin says,
 ‘(x) Do you think, Sirs, that we should have
 ‘been able to have understood these things in the
 ‘scriptures, unless, by the will of God, we had re-
 ‘ceived the gift from him.’

As Justin was a person of unquestioned probity;
 we cannot doubt of his sincerity in believing him-
 self to have had an extraordinary insight into the
 scriptures given him by the Almighty, though he
 most (y) wretchedly imposed upon himself in it.

His

(x) Εγω τε αν ειποι· ομοθε αυ ημας ποτε, ω ανδρες, νενοηκασαι δυ-
 ηθησαι εν ταις γραφαις ταυτα, ει μη διληματι τε διλησαντος αυτα ελαβε-
 μιν χαριν τε νοησαι;

(y) Justin attributes Joshua's victory over the Amalekites,
 Exod. xvii. 9.—12. not so much to the prayers of Moses, as
 to the circumstance of Joshua's leading the battle and having
 the same name with Jesus in the hebrew, and to the hands of
 Moses making the figure of the cross. « γαρ οι ειως πυχειο
 Μωσης, δια τελο κρισσαν ο λαος εγενετο· αλλ' οι εν αρχη της μαχης τε
 στοματιος τε ιησν ολιος, αυτος τε σημειον τε εαυτην ποιοι. Id. Ibid.
 p. 188.

In the same page, in Deut. xxxiii 13.—17. he finds the
 great power and mystery of the cross, particularly in the uni-

corn's

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His alleging that he himself was inspired, is no proof to us of it; and we can no more admit any new revelation from his own word, without some stamp of a divine authority, than we can pay respect to the waking dreams and revelations of (z) Baron Swedenborg.

corn's horns. And after mentioning these instances, he goes on to say, p. 189. *If therefore any one hath not received this great favour from God, to understand the things said and done by the prophets, it will be of no avail to him to read their sayings, or the things done by them, if he can give no reason for them.*

(z) I cannot here omit an account, which I received from a person living, of great worth and credit; that a friend of his, several years ago, walking with Baron Swedenborg along Cheapfide, in one part, the Baron suddenly bowed very low down to the ground; when the gentleman, lifting him up and asking, what he was about, the Baron replied, by asking him, if he did not see Moses pass by; and told him, that he had bowed to him. A man that could see Moses walking along Cheapfide, might see any thing. And Justin's word, and pretence for being inspired, is as little to be trusted, who could ascribe a victory of the Israelites to the position of Moses's hands, and to Joshua's particular name.

SECTION

SECTION XV.

Whence it was that Justin took up the idea of his being inspired in this respect.

The probable account of Justin's delusion may seem to have been this. Being of a warm enthusiastic turn, it struck his imagination, that Christ was the logos, the chief of those emanations from the supreme Being, of which his favourite Plato spoke. And as what we much wish, we easily persuade ourselves to be true, he was led to fancy, that he had a private revelation from God, that his mind was extraordinarily enlightened to see, that it was Christ, as the logos, who was mentioned by Moses and Solomon in those passages, in which we have seen him so egregiously mistaken.

What might at first promote, and continually confirmed this disposition in Justin to exalt the character of Christ, was the shame of the cross, the disgrace of having the founder of his new religion, a mere suffering mortal; which was slightly observed above.

It is remarkable, that he seldom mentions this latter circumstance, of Christ's being of the human race, but he immediately endeavours to wipe

off the stain of it, by throwing in something concerning his supposed divine generation.

In his apology to the emperors, after a fine passage, in which he describes the pure and rational worship which the christians paid to the creator of the universe, he says (*a*), ‘ I shall shew
 ‘ you, that with reason we honour him, who was
 ‘ our preceptor in these things; and who was for
 ‘ this end born, even Jesus Christ, who was cruci-
 ‘ fied by Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea,
 ‘ in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar; whom we are
 ‘ taught to have been the Son of the only true
 ‘ God, and hold him in the second rank; and
 ‘ in the third, the prophetic spirit. But in this we
 ‘ are counted to be persons out of our senses, in
 ‘ assigning the second place after the unchangeable
 ‘ and eternal God, and father of all things, to a
 ‘ *man that was put to death upon the cross*. But
 ‘ they know not *the great mystery* that is in it.

A little after he goes on thus to acquaint the emperors (*b*). “ But Jesus, who is called the Son
 ‘ of God, if he had been only a man, was, for
 ‘ his wisdom, worthy to have been called the
 ‘ Son of God; since all writers agree in styling
 ‘ God, the father of men and of gods. But if,
 ‘ besides this common generation, we say that
 ‘ Jesus was born of God, as being *the Word* of God,
 ‘ which I have observed before, we only herein
 ‘ agree

(*a*) Justin. Op. p. 51. (*b*) Justin. Op. p. 56. 57.

' agree with you, who call Mercury, *the word*,
 ' who carries messages from God, his interpreter.
 ' And if any object to us, that he suffered upon a
 ' cross; we may reply, that it is nothing more
 ' than happened to those, who are by you reckon-
 ' ed the sons of Jupiter, who are reported to have
 ' undergone different kinds of death: so that in
 ' his peculiar kind of death Jesus had nothing more
 ' reproachful than they. But *how far he surpassed*
 ' *them in virtue and goodness, will appear in what*
 ' *shall follow, or rather has already appeared.*
 ' *For true excellency can best be discerned by men's*
 ' *actions.*'

It is to be lamented, that Justin did not always abide by this superior excellency of moral character, as Christ's greatest honour and dignity; since it is in itself the highest possible perfection: instead of placing it, in a supposed preexistence, and a fanciful divine generation.

SECTION XVI.

Justin was the inventor of the doctrine of Christ's preexistence, and of his being the agent of the deity, in the old Testament.

It may hence be inferred, that Justin was the first author and propagator of the doctrine of Christ

13. being an inferior God, and subordinate creator of the world. For his assertions, that he had a divine gift bestowed upon him, whereby he found out this in the scriptures of the old Testament, bespeak it to have been quite a new thing to him, unheard of and unknown before. If he had been apprized that others had published the same doctrine before him, he would not have pretended to the discovery alone, and taken the credit of it to himself. For although much mistaken in this and other matters, he was a most honest man, and free from vanity, and from all desire of setting himself off for any thing. We may therefore conclude, that no christian whatsoever, at least that Justin knew of, had ever entertained such a thought concerning Christ before him.

Now this circumstance alone, to you that can judge without prejudice, will be a sufficient confutation of that imaginary preexistence, which Justin would give to Christ, and a proof that he was intirely one of the human race. For if such a doctrine had been true; that Christ, in any shape, or under any character whatsoever, had been the agent of the deity, in the creation of the universe, and afterwards his minister in the government particularly of this globe that we inhabit; can it be a thing possible, that he should never have told so wonderful a thing to his disciples, and that they should not have mentioned it to their disciples, and

and to the world? But nothing of this kind ever transpired. For it has been shewn, that all that language, of *coming from God, coming down from heaven*, and the like, signified nothing more than his having an extraordinary divine commission to preach the gospel. And it has been often, and rightly and justly observed, on these occasions, that no notice is taken of Christ as having preexisted; no respect or regards mentioned in the scripture, as paid or to be paid to him, but for the character which he so nobly sustained as a human being in this world. The highest praise recorded as given to him, is ascribed to him, as to the *lamb that was slain*: not to the Eternal, or the being next to the Eternal, for condescending to become man; but to the holy and innocent Jesus who willingly surrendered his life in the cause of truth and of human happiness. So that as no account is made of any thing that he was or did, before his birth in Judea, we must conclude, that he had no character before that time, and that then was the date of his existence.

If it should be said, that before the age of Justin, Barnabas had spoken of Christ as being concerned in the creation of the world, I would beg leave to refer to another place (c), for a full consideration of the language used by this venerable

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(c) Sequel to an Apology for resigning the vicarage of Catterick, p. 425—433.

ble ancient, whom very few of the learned allow to have been St. Paul's companion.

But indeed that writer, with others at that early period, had such a rage of allegorizing every thing in the Old Testament, and applying it to Christ and the gospel, that there is no possibility of collecting their real sentiments; if we could be sure that we have their genuine words. However, should they be found to teach any doctrine concerning Christ, to which the scripture gives no countenance, there can be no hesitation, which of the two we are to prefer.

Left any of those, who are not in the way of inquiring with exactness into such matters, should be perplexed with the language concerning Christ, which is found in another of the apostolic fathers; I would take occasion here briefly to say, that with respect to the epistles of Ignatius, it is universally allowed, that liberties have been taken with them, by different parties of christians; and I would only make one remark.

When (see Cotelier's edition of the *Patres Apostolici*, by Le Clerc, vol. ii.) in those epistles of this father, reckoned to be the least corrupted, we read in the beginning of the epistle to the Ephesians:

Page 11. ' It is by the will of the Father,
' and of Jesus Christ, *our God*.

Page

Page 15. 'Our God Jesus Christ, was carried in the womb of the virgin Mary.'

Page 27—29. 'Jesus Christ, God.'

Page 30. 'To the Smyrneans. I give thanks to the God Jesus Christ.'

—— 'To Polycarp. Farewell in our God
'Jesus Christ:'

With our New Testament in our heads, when we find such language, we must say, that the good father went beyond his rule, in talking in such a different strain from that of the scriptures, in making Christ any thing above the condition of a creature, and in applying the sacred name of God so familiarly to him. But it is most probable, that the word, *God*, in these places, was put in by some copyists, who wished to make this early writer appear to favour their peculiar sentiments of Christ.

SECTION XVII.

The early christian writers who came after Justin, adopted this notion of Christ being the agent, and representative of the Deity in the Old Testament.

But though we cannot take Justin's word without proof, that he had a particular illumination from the Divine Being, which enabled him to discover

cover Christ to be spoken of by Moses and Solomon, as an inferior God and under-creator and governor of the world, before he became man; and are moreover persuaded from examining their own words, and the weakness of Justin's inferences from them, that neither Moses nor Solomon knew aught of Christ's preexistence, or of the existence of any such great Being with God; it was nevertheless a doctrine so palatable, and agreeable to the learned of those times, who had embraced christianity, that the greater part of them received it implicitly, and even improved on Justin's invention.

This excellent person's known piety and many virtues, added to the authoritative air which he assumed of one really believing himself to be inspired, got the ascendant over men's minds, and made them take what he said to be true, without examination. And as it is of importance to make out clearly to all christian people, how such a delusion concerning Christ's preexistence, obtained a footing, and spread itself to such an extent, it will be proper for me to produce instances, from some of the principal christian fathers, and successors of Justin, not omitting others near our own times, to shew the extreme readiness with which they all fell into this notion, and their speaking of and citing the thing, as a real fact, without the least

least distrust, as they would any the most acknowledged fact in the scriptures, though nothing more than this good man's fanciful comment upon them.

SECTION XVIII.

Of Irenæus's copying of Justin's error concerning Christ.

And IRENÆUS shall lead the van; one, who when a boy, had known Polycarp; that had conversed with those who had seen Christ himself. This venerable writer was well acquainted with Justin's works, and held him in great reverence, as appears from his manner of quoting him (*d*).

In

(*d*) Καὶ καλῶς Ἰρηνεύς, ἐν τῷ πρὸς Μαρκίωνα συλλαγματί, φησὶ· ὅτι αὐτῷ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἐδ' αἱ πεποισθῆναι, ἀλλοὶ δὲ οὐ καὶ ἀγγέλλουσι παρὰ τοῖς δημιουργοῖς.—i. e. ‘ Well does Justin declare in his treatise against Marcion; “ I should not have believed the Lord himself, “ if he had taught any other to be God than the creator.”

Irenæi Op. Ed. Massnet. p. 233.

Marcion was a learned man, cotemporary with Justin, who fell into very extravagant errors. He was one of those early christians, pointed at above, p. 132, who, through ignorance, and wrong views of the system of nature, and of the imperfections of the jewish dispensation, maintained, that it was some inferior God, who was the creator, and giver of the law; and that ‘ Jesus was not the Son of the creator, but ‘ came from the supreme Father, when Pontius Pilate was ‘ procurator

In his curious and learned work against heresies, he says; ‘God (*e*) hath always with him the word and wisdom, the Son and Spirit, by whom he made all things freely, and of his own accord; and to whom he speaks,’ Gen. i. 26. saying, *let us make man after our image and likeness*. He had said the same a little before (*f*); only there he files the Son and Spirit, God’s hands. This is all a fine straight story. But who told Irenæus, or Justin, that God had two such assistants in the creation? Not Moses: nor Christ, or his apostles.

‘And again,’ proceeds he (*g*), ‘in the overthrow of Sodom, the scripture saith; *The Lord rained*

‘procurator of Judea, under Tiberius Cesar; and that he was manifested to the jews in a human form, to dissolve the law and the prophets, and to correct the works of the god who made the world:’ *Jesum autem ab eo Patre, qui est super mundi fabricatorem deum, venientem in Judeam, temporibus Pontii Pilati præsidis, qui fuit procurator Tiberii Cesaris, in hominis formâ manifestatum his qui in Judea erant, dissolventem prophetas et legem, et omnia opera ejus dei, qui mundum fecit.* Idem ibidem, p. 106.

(*e*) Adest enim Deo semper, verbum et Sapientia, filius et spiritus, per quos, et in quibus, omnia libere et sponte fecit; ad quos et loquitur; dicens, *faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, p. 253.

(*f*) Homo autem,—qui secundum similitudinem Dei formatus est, et per manus ejus plasmatus est, hoc est, per filium et spiritum; quibus et dixit, Gen. i. 26. *faciamus hominem*, p. 228.

(*g*) Et iterum in everfione Sodomitarum Scriptura ait, *Et pluit Dominus super Sodomam et Gomorrhâ, ignem et sulfur a Domino*

‘rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. The Son is here intended,’ continues Irenæus, p. 190. ‘who is the person that conversed with Abraham, and who received power from the Father to punish the Sodomites for their wickedness.’ Irenæus here copies Justin’s mistake in grammar, in bringing in *the Son*; and making two persons concerned, where Moses intended only one.

P. 236. ‘On this account (*b*), says he, the jews fell away from God, by not receiving the Word, but thinking to know the Father without the Word, *i. e.* without the Son, in not acknowledging him for God, who spoke in a human form to Abraham, Gen. xviii. and again to Moses, saying, *I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and am come down to them*, Exod. iii. 7. 8. For in these things the Son was manifested.’ Irenæus would have found

no

a Domino de cælo. Filium enim hic significat, qui et Abrahæ colloquutus sit, a patre accepisse potestatem ad judicandum Sodomitas, propter iniquitatem eorum. p. 180.

(*b*) Propter hoc judæi excesserunt a Deo, Verbum ejus non recipientes, sed putantes per seipsum Patrem sine Verbo, id est, sine filio, posse cognoscere; Deum nescientes eum qui in figura loquutus est humana ad Abraham, et iterum ad Moysen, dicentem, *videns vidi vexationem populi mei in Egypto, et descendi liberare eos.* Hæc enim filius, qui est verbum Dei ab initio præstruebat. p. 236.

no other God here but Jehovah, the Father, if he had not brought another God, the Son, along with him to the reading of the books of Moses. And you cannot but observe here, how he cites and misapplies, Matth. xi. 27. in his allusion to it, of *knowing the Father without the Son*; as Justin had done before him.

SECTION XIX.

Of Clemens Alexandrinus's copying of Justin's error concerning Christ.

CLEMENT of Alexandria in Egypt, a most learned man, and ingenious, animated writer; supposed to have been originally a heathen; lived at the latter end of the second century; we find him often celebrated as president of the famous school in that city; where many eminent persons, Origen and others, were bred up under him. He was a man of deep piety and virtue; and a preacher of the gospel in dangerous times. One of his works, intitled the *Pædagogus*, *i. e.* the Schoolmaster, is written purposely to form the minds of youth to goodness, to make them not only scholars, but better men; βελιωσαι, & διδασκαι. It is full of excellent things; but would have been read with more pleasure and profit if it had not been disfigured and obscured, with bringing in Christ continually,

tinually, in imitation of Justin; where the scriptures take no notice of any such imaginary personage, and God himself alone is intended. You will see his manner, in the following extracts, and quotations from this single work.

(i) ' Our (pædagogus) master, the holy god
' Jesus, the *Word*, the guide of all mankind, he,
' the benevolent *god*, is our master. And the
' holy spirit says of him in one place, in the
' song; Deut. xxxii. 10. 11. 12. *He supported*
' *his people in a desert land, and in the waste howl-*
' *ing wilderness: he led him about, he instructed*
' *him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an*
' *eagle protecteth her nest, fluttereth over her young,*
' *taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the*
' *Lord alone did lead him; there was no strange*
' *god with him.* Here I think the scripture evi-
' dently shews our master, and the care he takes.

' At another time, he owns himself the master,
' when speaking in his own person, he says,
' Exod. xx. 2. *I am the LORD thy God, who*
' *brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'*

' The same appeared to Abraham, Gen. xxvii. 1.
' and said, '*I am thy God: do that which is well-*
' *pleasing before me.* But he goes on still more like
' a good schoolmaster, to instruct his child: *and*
' *be thou perfect. And I will put my covenant be-*
' *tween me and thee, and thy seed.'*

' But

(i) Clem. Alex. Op. Ed. Potter. p. 131. 132.

‘ But he appears most evidently the Patriarch,
 ‘ Jacob’s master, when he says to him, Genesis
 ‘ xxviii. 15. *Behold, I am with thee; and will*
 ‘ *keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will*
 ‘ *bring thee again into this land: for I will not*
 ‘ *leave thee till I have done all that which I have*
 ‘ *spoken to thee.* With him also he is said to have
 ‘ wrestled, Gen. xxxii. 24. *And Jacob was left a-*
 ‘ *lone: and there wrestled a man with him, namely*
 ‘ *the master, until the break of day.*’

‘ This is God, the *Word*, the leader of his chil-
 ‘ dren, who afterwards said to him, Gen. xlv. 3.
 ‘ *Fear not to go down into Egypt.*’

Thus does this learned man, with the most perfect satisfaction, usher in Christ, governing and directing the Israelites, as an inferior God, where no one else, that is not under the same prejudices, can find any other but the Almighty Being, Jehovah himself.

And he advances this, without any apology, as an undoubted fact, which none of his readers would call in question. It is a thing not otherwise to be accounted for but by supposing, that either Clement thought himself inspired, or followed one whom he believed to have a divine gift of interpreting the scriptures, which Justin pretended to be possessed of, in the way shewn above.

What confused work learned men already began to make, with their thus introducing Christ as
 a second.

a second God, appears from the following prayer, with which Clement finishes his *Pædagogus* (e).

‘ It remains now that after this copious panegyric of the *Word*, we shut up the whole with prayer to the *Word*;—Be propitious to thy children, O master, father, charioteer of Israel, son and father, both one, Lord! Grant unto us—— that being arrived at the perfect day, giving thanks we may praise, and praising we may give thanks to the only Father and Son; Son and Father; Son, master and teacher; with also the holy spirit; one in all things; in whom are all things; by whom all things are one; by whom is eternity; of whom all are members; whose the glory, the ages. To him, in all things good, in all things excellent, in all things wise, in all things righteous; To him be glory now and for all ages (f).’

By comparing this with the prayer which our Lord taught us, you perceive how far the learned had

(e) Οπως εν λοιπῳ, επι τοιαυτῃ πανηγυρι τῷ λογῷ, τῷ λογῷ προσευξομεθα· κ.λ.λ. Clem. Alex. Op. vol. i. p. 311.

(f) From this strange rhapsody, as if it was of divine authority, Archbishop Potter gravely concludes, that ‘ we have a most ample testimony to the consubstantiality of the Son of God, and to his true divinity, and to that of the holy spirit, against the Arians.’ Porro amplissimum hoc τῷ ὁμοουσιῳ filij dei, ejusque ac S. Spiritus veræ divinitatis, contra Arianos, testimonium est. Not. in loc.

True
 Exhortation
 by
 Clement
 of
 Alexandria

had already departed from the simplicity of the gospel, with respect to the object of worship. But it is proper to observe, that however highly Clement thought of Christ as a god, he held him infinitely below the Divine Being himself. For in his Exhortation to the gentiles, in a fine strain of eloquence and devotion, he introduces Christ himself singing praises to God.

‘ Then,’ says he, (g) ‘ *shalt thou join the chorus of angels, hymning the Eternal, him who is without beginning, and without end, the only true God; God the word, joining together with us in the song. The everlasting Jesus, the one great high priest of the one God, and his Father, prays for mankind, and thus addresses them:* “ *Hear me, ye innumerable tribes, or rather all ye rational creatures of God, barbarians and greeks! I call to the whole human race, whose maker I am, by the will of the Father. Come unto me, and arrange yourselves under the one God, and the one word of God!*” &c. &c.

(i) Id. Ibid. p. 92. 93.

SECTION XX.

Of Tertullian's copying of Justin's error concerning Christ.

TERTULLIAN, the most antient of the latin fathers, flourished about the year 200. He was a man of great learning and irreproachable character; but severe in his temper, and given to carry things to extremes.

What he advances after Justin, on the subject of Christ being the acting God of the old world, is a proof of this. One instance from him will suffice. It is taken from his book against Praxeas, who was unquestionably a Unitarian, though Tertullian misunderstood and misrepresents his sentiments.

(b) 'Thus all things,' says he, 'were made by the Son, and without him nothing was made.'

N 2

'But

(b) Sic omnia per filium facta sunt, et sine illo factum est nihil. Nec putes sola opera mundi per filium facta, sed et quæ a deo exinde gesta sunt. Pater enim qui diligit filium, et omnia tradidit in manu ejus; utique a primordio diligit, a primordio tradidit. Ex quo a primordio sermo erat apud deum, et Deus erat sermo, cui data est omnis potestas a patre in cælis et in terra. Non judicat pater quæquam, sed omne judicium tradidit filio: a primordio tamen,

Omnem

' But do not imagine, that all the works only of
 ' creation were wrought by the Son; all the trans-
 ' actions of the deity have been also from that time
 ' carried on by him. For the Father who loveth
 ' the Son, and hath delivered all things into his
 ' hand, loveth him alike from the beginning, and
 ' from the beginning hath delivered all things to him;
 ' because that the Word was with God from the
 ' beginning, and the Word was God, to whom all
 ' power is given in heaven and earth by the Fa-
 ' ther. The Father judgeth no man, but hath
 ' committed all judgment to the Son: but then
 ' all is from the beginning. For the saying, all
 ' power, all judgment, all things made by him,
 ' all things delivered into his hand, admits no ex-
 ' ception or limitation of time. For they will not
 ' be all things, if they are not of all time. It is
 ' the Son therefore, who hath executed all judg-
 ' ment from the beginning; who demolished the proud
 ' tower of Babel, dividing their tongues; who pu-
 ' nished

Omnem enim dicens potestatem, et omne iudicium, et omnia per eum facta, et omnia tradita in manu ejus, nullam exceptionem temporis permittit: quia omnia non erunt, si non omnis temporis fuerint. Filius itaque est qui ab initio iudicavit, turrim superbissimam elidens, linguasque dispersiens, orbem totum aquarum violentia puniens, pluens super Sodomam et Gomorram ignem et sulphurem; Dominus a Domino. Ipse enim et ad humana colloquia semper descendit: ab Adam usque ad patriarchas et prophetas; in visione, in somnio, &c. &c." Tertullian. adversus Praxeam, p. 509.

‘*nished the whole globe by a deluge of waters; who
 ‘rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and
 ‘brimstone, the Lord from the Lord. He it
 ‘was who always descended to converse with man-
 ‘kind; from Adam down to the patriarchs and
 ‘prophets; in visions, by dreams, &c.’*

This is a sample of Tertullian's manner of proving his favourite points, by quoting scraps from different parts of scripture, and putting them together according to the sound, and as they suited his present fancy and purpose, without any attention to what the writers intended: a method of interpreting the scriptures still very common, and by which any absurdity may be grafted upon them. When once a man of warm imagination, like Tertullian, persuaded himself, that the preface of St. John's gospel was intended to describe Christ, as the *Word*, as a second God, by whom all things were made: the rest follows of course. Though neither Moses, nor Solomon, nor any other of the sacred writers, acknowledged themselves, or represent any of the holy men whose history they give us, as having any the least knowledge of such a second God, the *Word*; yet as it is taken for granted that he made all things, he must govern them too: and by setting the imagination to work, it is easily accomplished. This new God, the *Word*, the Son, is every thing. All communications to, and transactions with the

N 3

creatures

+ Waterland - Taylor - Robinson &c.

ah! creatures are made by him. The sovereign Lord and parent of all things becomes an idle spectator, who has nothing to do. But all this æry fabric vanishes away, when brought to the test of common sense, and the scriptures. One person only is there spoken of throughout, as being God; without any coadjutor, or representative. And the worship of patriarchs and prophets, of Christ and of his apostles, is directed to this single person of Jehovah, the supreme Father in heaven, and to no other besides him.

SECTION XXI.

Of Eusebius's copying of Justin's error concerning Christ.

EUSEBIUS, the justly celebrated ecclesiastical historian, a man of genius and extensive learning, and polite writer, shall close the list of the antients; of those men, who very principally contributed to promote and carry on the delusion, which he had received from those that went before him, and which made Christ, the agent of the deity in the creation, and throughout the whole old Testament. Abating his fine strains of eloquence, Eusebius will be found an exact copier of Justin, though he much improved and extended his heathen

heathen invention. Near the beginning of his ecclesiastical history, he thus launches out (l); *No language can be sufficient to express the race and splendor, the substance and nature of Christ. And hence it is, that the divine spirit saith in the prophecies; Who shall declare his generation? For as no one knoweth the Father but the Son, so can no one know the worth of the Son but the Father. For who but the Father can clearly comprehend that antemundane light, that intellectual and substantial Wisdom before all ages, that living word, who was God with the Father in the beginning, &c.*

Unfortunately, the two passages (m) on which Eusebius builds these fine conclusions, give no support to them whatsoever. For, as we have

N 4

often

(l) Euseb. Hist. Eccl. p. 4.

(m) How much Eusebius depended upon these two passages of scripture, whose meaning he so intirely mistakes, appears from the manner in which he cites them together again in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, p. 216. 'But let others,' says he, 'put what value they please upon these things, I am satisfied with repeating over again, that true and pious declaration, (Isaiah liii. 8.) *Who shall declare his generation?* And indeed the generation of the only-begotten Son of God, not only surpasses human comprehension, but the powers of all superior natures. As our Lord and Saviour himself intimates, when initiating his chosen disciples into these mysteries, Matt. xi. 27. *No man, says he, knoweth the Father, but the Son:* and immediately adds, *no one knoweth the Son, but the Father.*'

often a call to mention, the first, from Isaiah, is a wrong translation of the prophet's words, who speaks not of Christ's *generation*, but of the men of *that generation*, by whom Christ was so cruelly treated. And in the other passage, Matt. xi. 27. he intirely mistakes the meaning of Christ; who is not saying any thing of the nature of the Father, or of his own nature, but of the will of the supreme Father, of which he only was the depository; and therefore none could be fully acquainted with it, but by communications from him.

Having next cited, in a solemn manner, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, &c.* as teaching Christ to be a God, though far from it, as we have seen; Eusebius pompously goes on (n). *' That great character, Moses likewise, the most antient of all the prophets, when, by the divine spirit's inspiration he described the creation, informs us, that the supreme artist and maker of the universe, gave to Christ his divine and first-born Word, the formation of inferior substances, and consulted with him about man's creation. Gen. i. 26. For he tells us, God said, let us make man after our image, in our likeness. And another of the prophets confirms this declaration, thus deifying Christ as the Word, in his hymns: Psal. xxxii. He spake, and they were made: he commanded, and they were created: thus introducing the Father,*

(n) Hist. Eccl. p. 5.

'ther, and the creator, as the sovereign Lord of
 'all, giving his command with a royal nod; and
 'the divine Word, second in rank to the Father,
 'him whom we preach to be the Christ, ministring
 'and obedient to the Father's commands. Him,
 '(viz. Christ) all that have been eminent for piety,
 'and virtue, from the first formation of man, Moses
 'that famous servant of God, and before him, Abra-
 'ham and his posterity, and all righteous men and
 'prophets since, beholding him with the pure eyes
 'of the understanding, they have acknowledged,
 'and paid him that worship, which is due to the
 'Son of God.'

This eloquent declamation wants nothing but
 truth to recommend it; this learned man hav-
 ing suffered himself to be imposed upon, and
 imposing upon others in it. For neither Moses,
 nor Abraham, nor any of the prophets and righte-
 ous men, named in the scriptures, appear ever to
 have known, much less to have worshiped, any
 such inferior god and subordinate creator, as he
 describes.

Eusebius then proceeds to give particular instan-
 ces, (produced by Justin before him, in which he
 has been shewn sadly to have misunderstood the
 sacred writings,) of Christ's acting in this cha-
 racter of an inferior god. I shall content myself
 with barely mentioning them.—“ That it was
 'the Word, Christ, as ministring to the Father,
 'who

' who appeared to Abraham, (Gen. xviii.) in the
 ' plains of Mamre: That Moses evidently stiles
 ' him, Lord, next to the Father, when he says,
 ' Gen. xix. 24. *The Lord rained brimstone and fire*
 ' *from the Lord*: That it was he that appeared
 ' to Joshua, v. 13. 14; and from this passage,
 ' compared with Exod. iii. 5. 6, he endeavours
 ' to make it out, that it was he who said to
 ' Moses; *I am the God of thy Fathers, &c.*' and
 he concludes. in a most pompous stile, that Christ
 was that Word, and Wisdom of God, who mi-
 nistered to the Father and God of the universe
 in the formation of all creatures, as Wisdom her-
 self declared, Prov. viii. by the mouth of Solo-
 mon.

In Eusebius's *Preparatio Evangelica*, most of
 these texts are again (v) cited, and applied to
 Christ, as this great preexistent being, of Justin
 Martyr's first invention; together with other pas-
 sages from the old Testament.

But in his other large work, his *Demonstratio*
Evangelica, he enters more minutely into the doc-
 trine of the generation of Christ, the *Word*, as
 produced from God before the creation, and also

(δ) Ο μὲν ἢ Μωϋσῆς διαφθνήν δύο θεολογεῖ Κυρίως, ἢ οἷς φησὶ, καὶ
 εἰσεῖθε Κύριος παρὰ Κυρίου αὐτοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ. i. e. Moses expressly dei-
 fies two LORDS (two Jehos) when he says; *The Lord*
rained from the Lord fire and brimstone.

Prep. Evang. p. 532.

as his instrument in making and governing the world. And in consequence of his full persuasion of this imaginary preexistence of Christ, he never meets with the term, the *word*, or any thing of the kind, in the bible, but his imagination immediately transfers it to Christ.

And thus the superior abilities of this most capable defender of the truth, were diverted from their proper and most beneficial channel in his valuable and useful writings; and employed in distorting the scriptures from their plain and natural sense, to favour an imaginary dignity and high antiquity of our Saviour Christ; instead of displaying, what is of far more worth and excellence in any creature, his high office from God, to promote the virtue and eternal happiness of mankind, and his own consummate virtue, and benevolent labours and suffering unto death, in the accomplishment of it.

SECTION

SECTION XXII.

*Of the perversion of the hebrew scriptures by these
antient fathers, as they are called.*

In the works of these ecclesiastical writers, and leaders of the christian world, Justin, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian and Eusebius, all of them copiers after the first in respect of the subject of our inquiry; it is pronounced in the most decisive terms, that God, together with his Word, the Son, are the prime authors of every thing throughout the universe; the Son, an inferior God, ministering to the supreme, and who is also represented as particularly appearing, and acting for him throughout the whole old Testament. And according to this idea, constructions intirely foreign to the thoughts of the sacred writers, are put upon their words; and they are brought in teaching the existence of this new God, now that they are dead, whom they themselves never knew any thing of, when alive.

Justin, in his writings that remain, never cites the preface of St. John's gospel, though he very frequently calls Christ, the *logos*, the *Word*. But all these other fathers hold Christ to be the *Word*, there spoken of, and build his divinity chiefly upon it. It has been, however, in the preceding sheets, demonstrated, may we not say; that this *logos*, *Word*,
Wisdom,

Wisdom, is not a name of Christ, as a great per-
 existent being, and second God; but a name, or
 attribute of the Divine Being himself, as the jews
 understand concerning Wisdom, as mentioned in
 Proverbs viii.

These learned men nevertheless, carried away
 with this notion, find Christ throughout the old Tes-
 tament, wherever the term, *logos*, *word*, occurs;
 and wherever God is said to command any thing,
 they immediately fancy that he speaks to Christ.
 Thus, to name no more instances, Eusebius (p)
 applies to Christ, Pf. xxxiii. 9. *He spake, and it*
was done: he commanded, and they were created.
 And Pf. cvii. 20. *He sent his word, and healed*
them, and they were delivered from their destructions.

But if you turn to the reading of the sacred
 books, without their comments, you find no such
 two divine beings, to whom your regards are to
 be paid: no mention of any second God, called
 the *logos*, the *Word*, the *Son*. The sacred pen-
 men knew nothing, teach nothing of the kind,
 whatever refinements learned men may make on
 their words, and whatever conclusions of their own
 they may draw from them.

Would any one, for example, but a man, like
 Eusebius, full of these philosophic notions and pre-
 judices about two Gods, a first and a second,
 ever

(p) Hist. Eccl. p. 5. 6.

110.
110.
ever have found any but the Divine Being himself in the two passages just now produced from the Psalms? In one of which, xxxiii. 9. the psalmist beautifully describes with what ease, as by a word's speaking, the Almighty made the world, and accomplishes all his purposes. And in Ps. cvii. that he saves his creatures, when all other helps and remedies are ineffectual.

Never would this celebrated writer have found Christ, a second God and creator, in any of the innumerable passages of scripture he has produced, if he had not been prepossessed beforehand with the idea. Interpret but the language of scripture, as common sense dictates; as the hebrews, whose language it is, have in all times understood it: that God's word, wisdom, spirit, by which he does every thing, is himself; as the word, wisdom, spirit of a man, are the man himself; and an end will be put to this new second God and creator, which these christian fathers have palmed upon the world these fifteen hundred years; and thereby, to say no more of the mischief they have caused, have hindered countless multitudes from embracing the gospel.

SECTION

SECTION XXIII.

Of the influence of Justin's character, and peremptory assertions, over some eminent modern christians.

We cannot wonder, that in the many dark ages that followed the time of Eusebius, when the civil power first interposed under the emperor Constantine, to establish the belief of Christ's divinity by confiscation and death, a law which has continued in all christian countries, with greater or less severity to this hour; that few should dare to speculate upon, and call in question, what so many venerable fathers, as they are called, had settled, and which had the sanction of such awful authority. But one is surprized, that in the days of our fathers, the justly celebrated Dr. Clarke, who ventured openly to publish his dissent from the doctrine of the Trinity by law established, should suffer himself to be dazzled by the authority and assertions of Justin, when he repeats with approbation the sayings of this antient father, that
'the jews were reproved by the prophet Isaiah
'and by Christ, for imagining that it was the
'father of the universe, who spake to Moses, when
'it was indeed the Son of God, who is called
'the angel and messenger of the Father.' And
again,

again, quoting those other words of Justin; 'that
 ' the appearance, which Moses saw, *Exod. iii. 3.*
 ' —6. was both an angel and God; yet it was not
 ' God, the creator of the universe, which then said
 ' to Moses, that he was *the God of Abraham, the*
 ' *God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; but it was
 ' the person, whom he says, he had before shewed
 ' to have appeared to Abraham, and to Jacob,
 ' and at the judgment of Sodom, ministering to
 ' the will of the Father (g).'

How humiliating is it, and may well make all
 others modest, and distrustful of themselves, to see
 this eminently learned man, and able reasoner, giv-
 ing into the weak, unsupported conceit of a second
 God, ministering to the supreme, which Justin im-
 ported from Plato's philosophy into christianity; and
 not able to discern the misrepresentation of those
 passages of scripture alleged by this antient writer,
 but so blinded as to bring himself to believe, that the
 whole nation of the jews did not know who was
 the particular God, who spoke to Moses, and de-
 livered to them their law: nay, it might be ad-
 ded, that none of the nation ever knew it, from
 the beginning! For it has been made evident, that
 neither Moses, nor any of the prophets, had any
 idea themselves, or ever gave the remotest hint,
 that Jehovah, their God, had any person who was his
 represen-

(g) Dr. Clarke's Scripture doctrine of the Trinity. p. 121.

122. 3d. Edit.

representative, or that acted for him; much less that it was one, who afterwards became man.

It is the more extraordinary, that Dr. Clarke should fall under this delusion, when our Lord never once mentions such a character of inferior deity having been sustained by himself from the beginning, or demanded any respect or worship on that account, which certainly would have been due to him; and also, that one so versed in scripture, should overlook so many passages of it, which expressly contradict any idea of the kind concerning Christ; particularly that above-noted, Acts iii. 13. where Jesus is stiled *the servant of the God of Abraham, &c.*; and therefore most assuredly could not be the God of Abraham himself.

After Dr. Clarke, followed in our own day, and a very few years ago only taken away from us, the last learned man, I trust, that will ever support a doctrine so peculiarly discountenanced by the scripture, having scarce any shadow of argument but what arises from its mistaken phraseology.

Benjamin Ben Mordecai, *otherwise* the late ingenious, and most worthy, Henry Taylor, Rector of Crawley, Hants, undertook very particularly the maintenance of this opinion, first invented by Justin; and attempted to prove, that Christ, being the *Word*, mentioned in the preface of St. John's gospel, *by whom all things were made*; was the

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ministring

ministring angel, or agent of Jehovah, the true God from the beginning; his instrument, employed by him in the creation, and his constant representative upon earth; that he appeared to Adam, and to the patriarchs; that he was the giver of the law; and that he it was, who was worshipped, in the tabernacle, and in the temple, as the substitute of the true God; and afterwards became man.

This was going through with the matter, without reserve. It will not however be needful for me to say any thing concerning this strange doctrine, which no Jew ever found in their bible, as in another place (r), some few years since, I endeavoured to refute all that has been advanced on the subject by this valuable writer; who, in other respects, hath deserved so well of the literary, and christian world.

(r) A Sequel to an Apology for resigning the vicarage of Catterick. p. 324—386.

SECTION

SECTION XXIV.

Of the dazzling plea from antiquity, in favour of this notion of Justin concerning Christ.

When persons, who have not had leisure to consider the subject, are told of a long list of learned men, nearly from the days of the apostles, holding this particular doctrine of Christ being a person spoken of by Moses, as next to God, and the subordinate creator of the world under him; and have had this idea of Christ instilled into them from their youth; their understanding and senses are quite overpowered with such a presumed glare of evidence, that oftentimes they will not hear of any thing offered against it: deeming it impossible, that learned men, so many of them, and for so many ages, should have been mistaken in a matter of so great importance.

But if they would give themselves the trouble to reflect and inquire a little, the most unlearned might see and be satisfied, that there is nothing of solidity, that should weigh with any one, in the argument arising from the great number of persons, who for so long a course of years, have embraced this opinion.

For it has been amply proved, that it is not the doctrine of the scriptures; but had it's origin from a heathen convert to christianity, about the year 140, who brought the notion from his philosophy,

and grafted it upon the bible; and who deceived himself, by fondly imagining that he was inspired with a sagacity from God, enabling him to discover Christ to have been mentioned by Moses, and in the Old Testament, as the agent of God in the creation of the world, and his representative afterwards in the government of it. And a doctrine of this kind being laid down with warm zeal, as a revelation from God himself, coming from a truly pious man, in the very next age to the apostles, imposed upon many; and being thus at first received as the scripture itself, and handed down implicitly from age to age, it in time became the almost universal belief.

So that instead of saying with Dr. Clarke (s), that 'it is the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, that Christ was the person, who said to Moses, *Exod. iii. 6. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, &c.* and who spake and acted from the beginning, in the name and person of the invisible Father'

It would be more justly and truly said; that it was originally the fond presumption, and conceit, of one well-meaning, but mistaken man, that Moses and Solomon make mention of Christ, as an inferior God, ministering to the supreme father of the universe: which was taken up on his authority,

(s) *Scripture Doctrine, &c.* p. 121.

rity, by the (1) learned only at first: but spreading by degrees through their influence, and aided afterwards by the civil power, this doctrine of a second god pervaded all ranks of christians: and as superstition knows not where to stop, in no long course of time, from looking upon Christ, according to Justin's fanciful supposition, as an inferior god, they began to make him equal to the infinite (u) and eternal Being: as is the public profession concerning him, to this day, throughout christendom.

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And

(1) All the learned christians of that time were far from favouring Justin's new doctrine of Christ being a second God, spoken of in the hebrew scriptures. Many, whose names are recorded, with numberless others unknown, continued to hold him to be a human being, with extraordinary powers from God. And it has been amply proved, that whilst Justin, and the philosophic christians after him, indulged themselves in their unscriptural speculations, concerning the logos, the *Word*, as the Son of God before all time, and his eternal generation: ordinary christians, of plain understanding, kept close to the doctrine of the apostles concerning Christ, as being a man of the jewish nation, and the Son of God in no other sense, than that of having received his being, and extraordinary favours and communications from God.

(u) Concerning the exact period when this great corruption took place among christians, see Dr. Priestley's Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. sect. iii. p. 324, &c. a work necessary for every one, who would obtain a true knowledge of many important things concerning Christ's religion.

And the fatal example and precedent of this one well-meaning man bringing this lamentable polytheism into the christian church, which still continues, and has lasted for so many ages, may be a warning to all christians, to beware of fixing notions and doctrines of their own upon the scriptures, instead of carefully examining the declarations of the prophets, of Christ, and his apostles, what it was that they really taught concerning God and Christ, and teaching and adhering to that only.

SECTION XXV.

Of Justin's Character.

From Justin Martyr, therefore, ye studious youth, though living so very near the time of the apostles, you cannot learn the right method of interpreting the scriptures, or a just knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ; to what class of beings he belonged, human, or divine: for his philosophy had led him sadly wrong in both these respects.

But he will teach you piety, probity, a just government of your passions, an ardent love of truth, and to refuse no pains to attain, and to recommend it to others.

In all his writings I have not observed one proud, conceited thought. He never appears studious to set himself off for any thing, desirous only to bring
men

men to virtue and to the gospel. Where he happens to speak in such a high tone, and takes upon him to censure the jews for their ignorance of their own scriptures; it was because he believed himself inspired. So that it is not the air and boast of a vain man, but of an honest enthusiast.

The benevolence of his mind is most conspicuous every where, in his labours to bring all men out of the darkness and miseries of vice, and idolatry, to the knowledge of the supreme creator and father of the universe.

So far from saying any thing against those who believed Christ to be a human creature only, when speaking of them, he seems rather to apologize *(r)* for the novelty of his own opinions. Very different in this from Eusebius the ecclesiastical historian, who coming near two centuries after him, when the doctrine of Christ's preexistence and divinity was grown old, and established and supported by the secular powers, gives way to much angry abuse and calumny against those who denied it. And who, on account of his violent prejudices, is to be read with caution when he pronounces concerning the person of Christ, or speaks of unitarians.

Justin moreover, although fatally mistaken in this one point, well understood, and has given a just exhibition of the sublime morality of the gospel, and every where shews that he had imbibed the spirit of it. And, in those times of fiery trial,

he stood forth in defence of our religion, by maintaining in his writings its excellence; and the innocence of its professors, and by boldly remonstrating to the emperors on their injustice to their christian subjects; and at last nobly gave up his life for it in the cause of the gospel.

(r) I would here refer to the famous passage in Justin's dialogue with Trypho the jew, of which there is a translation, with remarks, in an Examination of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge's Plea for Christ's Divinity, p. 192, 193.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION.

The testimony of all the apostles concerning the DIVINE UNITY, and the character and condition of their lord and master Jesus Christ, as being entirely one of the human race. The cause of the early falling away of christians from this doctrine of the apostles. The plainness of this doctrine concerning GOD and Christ, as laid down in the scripture. A rule by which every one may be able to decide for himself concerning it. By following this rule many christians became unitarians at the beginning of the reformation, and many are now returning to the doctrine of the apostles concerning God and Christ. This happy effect will still more be seen, when one great impediment is removed, by having the scriptures fairly laid before them in the mother-tongue.

I.

IN the first chapter of this work, there has been an examination of every thing related concerning the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the four historians of his life, Matthew, Mark, Luke,

Luke, and John, which can be supposed to refer to any prior existence which he possessed before he became man; and also a very minute analysis of all the passages in St. Luke's second treatise, *The Acts*, tending to exhibit a just idea of what his apostles thought and taught concerning him in that respect, after his resurrection.

The other writers likewise of the new Testament have come in review before us, and their sentiments concerning our Saviour have been inquired into; to what class of beings he belonged; whether he was God, or only his creature?

And we have found it to be the sentiment of *all* the penmen of the New Testament, and of *all* the characters recorded and brought forward by them;

1. That there is one Being only, the Father, who is the true God, and to be worshiped; the single person of him who is the God, and Father of Jesus Christ, and of all mankind; the sole creator, and sovereign lord of all. And

2. That Jesus Christ was nothing more than a man, born, and bred in Judea; a prophet, and messenger of the most high God, and teacher of his will to mankind.

But as many, who acknowledge that Christ was a human being, contend also that before that, he had an existence in heaven; we have examined all that language of our Lord, concerning himself, on which this notion of his preexistence is chiefly founded;

founded; viz. his coming down from heaven, coming forth from the Father, being sent from God, having been before Abraham; having had glory with the Father before the world was; and we have discovered from the explanation given by our Lord himself of this language; that it did not relate to any being that he had in another world, but to the dignity and office intended for him, and which he received from God, in this world.

This has been proved to be our Lord's meaning in such phrases, by all just rules of criticism, and fair interpretation. And it is also in perfect agreement with his general stile concerning himself, viz. that he was one whom *the Father had sent*; his messenger.

It is too remarkable a circumstance to be passed over unnoticed, that this doctrine concerning our Lord Jesus Christ being intirely one of the human race, is most extraordinarily confirmed by St. Luke in *The Acts*, where that historian exhibits continually, and most distinctly, the sentiments of the apostles concerning their lord and master Jesus; and the manner in which they spoke of him, and preached his religion, to jews and heathens, after his resurrection.

Here we sometimes find one apostle (*Acts* ii. 14. 22.) in the name of the rest; sometimes two of them (*iii.* 13. 14.) separately; at another time all the apostles joined together in an act of solemn worship, and declaring (*iv.* 24—30.) God to be
one

one single person, God by himself alone, the sovereign Lord of all; and Jesus, a creature of the human race, and of their own nation, his servant.

Nay, for this last, we have not only the testimony of *all* the apostles; but also of Christ himself, speaking from heaven; declaring himself to have been originally, and of course, still to be, only a human being. I AM JESUS OF NAZARETH. Acts xxii. 8.

In the same book, *The Acts*, it has also appeared, that St. Paul (xvii. 24. 31.) very expressly teaches the Athenians, that the Divine Being, God, was the creator of all things; and that Jesus Christ was a human creature, highly honoured and distinguished by him. Whence it follows, unless you would make him contradict himself, that when the same apostle, in his epistles, speaks of all things being *created* by Jesus Christ, it is to be understood, not of the original creation of the world, but of a creation of another kind, the new creation or reformation of the world by the gospel: which has also been shewn by learned men to have been what the apostle alone intended, whenever he speaks of a creation in which Christ was concerned.

Now all this surely is sufficient for our satisfaction, who, and what manner of person and of what condition Christ was: viz. the testimony of all

+ not, "I am the eternal Son of God, his
the God of Abraham, &c. or Jehovah
Jesus" — as Divines have unwarrantably
called him.

his apostles, the testimony of himself; that he was in his origin, and still continued to be, one of the human species.

The testimony of Christ and his apostles satisfies me, - II.

But as many have been imposed upon, so as to imagine that the apostles themselves held the pre-existence of Christ, because that doctrine came into the christian church so very early; it seemed to me expedient and proper, after having proved, as above, what the doctrine of the apostles concerning their master Jesus, was, to point out when christians began to deviate from it, and to make him a different being from what the apostles taught him to be.

And I trust, that it has been made clearly to appear from its proper evidence, in the second chapter of this work, that this heathen doctrine of more Gods than one, took its rise from heathen philosophers, who embraced the gospel at its very first preaching, and who brought in with them their notions of one supreme, and of many inferior gods, and maintained Jesus Christ to have been one of these latter secondary deities. And moreover, a series of proofs have been produced, that Justin Martyr, was the principal, if not the sole author of this polytheistic system; in which he has been followed, though with large improvements upon him, to the present times.

It

It was no difficult matter to shew the futility of this good man's pretensions to inspiration upon this subject; and the weakness of his arguments, where he would draw in Moses and Solomon as vouchers of his new doctrine, which made Christ, under the character of the *logos*, the *Word*, a subordinate god and creator, ministering to the supreme Father of the universe, before he became man. For there is not the least trace in their writings, as hath been shewn, that Moses or Solomon had any idea that there was any such person existing as Christ; or that there was any God, or creator, but **JEHOVAH**.

III.

This doctrine of the Divine Unity, and of Christ being altogether one of the human species, raised up among the jews to serve the extraordinary purposes of the divine providence and favour to mankind; is so plainly legible in every page of the bible, where God and Christ are mentioned; that if you can bring persons to take their opinions from that book, and not to force it to speak only what they have learned before from their nurses and priests, the spell of superstition and polytheism is broken, and the important point settled: God will be found throughout the scriptures to be *one* in the strictest sense; Jesus Christ, only his honoured servant, and messenger to mankind, favoured above others

*True
God.
Jews.*

others for his eminent virtues; and the Spirit, or holy Spirit, will be plainly discovered to be nothing but the divine and extraordinary power, imparted to Jesus and his followers, during that first age of our religion, in order to prove that it came from God; and to qualify them to teach it with effect to the world.

IV.

It has been often found, and has been particularly exemplified above, in the case of that good man and eminent preacher of the gospel, Dr. Watts; that plainly as the doctrine of the Divine Unity is delivered in the sacred writings, many sincere christians are prevented from seeing it, through the strong bias, which their early education has put upon their minds in the wrong interpretation of certain phrases and passages, which they could not get over, nor emancipate themselves from their former prejudices, so as to exercise their judgments freely in inquiry, whether there are three divine persons, each of them God, or one person only who is God.

But there is a method of inquiry, and way of reasoning upon the question, which is level to all capacities; and which, if men could be free to use it, would enable them to arrive at certainty in this intricate matter, (an intricacy however of christians own making, whereas it is far from

from being such in itself); and to decide without fear or scruple, for themselves. And it is this.

It may be assumed as a maxim, which cannot be controverted; that a doctrine of such importance as that which relates to the Being that made us, and whom we are to worship, whether it be one person, one intelligent agent, or consisting of two or three such persons; cannot depend upon one or two particular passages of scripture, especially such as are doubtful and obscure; but must be what is apparent throughout the whole, wherever the name of God occurs, and be every where plain and intelligible to the ordinary plowman, who makes use of his understanding, as to the greatest scholar.

Now if you apply this rule to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, to there being one God only, one in the strictest sense, one person: you find this to be the most plain and evident, in every page of the sacred writings, where the Divine Being is mentioned. For always, some one of the singular pronouns, *I, thou, he, me, thee, him,* are used concerning that ineffable and peerless majesty; which demonstrate the point, to every sound understanding, that God is one single person, beyond the possibility of confutation; and necessarily exclude Jesus Christ, and every other person whatsoever, from being God.

But

But with respect to the *Trinity*, as it is called; to there being *Three Divine Persons*, who are each of them God, and to be adored, by distinct personal invocations, God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghost; there is not one book of the *OLD Testament*, wherein a man of a plain unprejudiced understanding, could find, that there were any more persons than one, or any other than the single person of *Jehovah*, who was God, and to be worshiped.

The far greater part of the books of the *NEW Testament* can not be said to hold forth an idea of any such three divine persons and their worship; speaking expressly of one person only, who was God, and to be worshiped; so that we must necessarily infer, that the sacred writers of these books knew nothing of such three divine persons, but of one only.

And there are but three passages of those usually alleged, that can with any shadow of pretence, faint as it is, be said to favour this doctrine of a *Trinity*, or of three divine persons, each of which is God.

The first is, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.*
 ' That is (a), go ye therefore into all the world,
 ' and teach, or disciple all nations, baptising them
 into

(a) This is *Dr. Lardner's Paraphrase. Letter on the Logos, p. 119.*

‘ into the possession of faith in, and an obligation
 ‘ to obey, the doctrine taught by Christ, with au-
 ‘ thority from God the Father, and confirmed
 ‘ by the holy Spirit, viz. the miraculous powers
 ‘ imparted to Christ and his apostles.”

This has been shewn above to have been all that our Lord intended by this baptismal form: so that he was intirely unacquainted with the doctrine of a Trinity, although his followers have made him a part of it.

St. Paul’s pious farewell salutation to the christians at Corinth, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. is another passage much rested upon, as teaching the doctrine of three divine persons. The words of the original ought to be thus rendered (*b*). *The grace, or favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the participation of the holy Spirit be with you all.* And by the holy Spirit, of which the apostle wished them to be partakers, he assuredly intended no divine person, but the divine gifts and powers at that period dispensed to believers, and necessary in general, for the establishment of the gospel in the world.

The grace or favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, is nothing more than an usual phrase to signify the blessings of the gospel, the favour of God, of which we have the most perfect assurance by Jesus Christ.

(*b*) See Commentaries and Essays by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures. Vol. i. p. 134. &c.

Christ. In a more abridged way of writing, our apostle styles it *grace* or favour alone. As Coloss. iv. 18. *Grace be with you.* When the love of God is added to it, as here, it signifies that grace, or favour of God, which proceedeth from his love to mankind, and was revealed to us by Christ.

The other passage of scripture, and the only one which can be brought for any shew or semblance of proof of a Trinity in Unity, of three persons being one God, is 1 John v. 7. *For there are three that bear record* [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth] *the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.* But the words within crotchets are generally acknowledged to be spurious, by all the learned who have any regard for their characters, as scholars; and therefore being not a part of scripture, or of the apostle's writing, cannot be alleged as a proof of any thing to a christian.

TRY now farther this rule of sound and just reasoning with respect to Jesus Christ being God, as you have done with respect to the Trinity.

All the writers, and all the characters introduced, in the OLD Testament, know not any such God or divine person, as Jesus Christ; speak of no person as God but one, JEHOVAH, the maker of heaven and earth. And where any thing is said by the prophets concerning Christ, he is al-

ways mentioned as a human being, and favoured servant of God, that was in some future time to be raised up by him, to serve his great designs for the whole human race.

It has also been particularly and fully proved in the first chapter of this work, that all the writers of the new Testament and all the apostles, held their lord, and master, Jesus, to be nothing more than one of mankind, and the highly distinguished messenger and servant of the supreme Father, and sovereign Lord of all; and moreover, that this was the constant language of Jesus concerning himself; those few passages wherein he speaks of his *coming down from heaven* and the like, having been shewn not to refer to any former state in which he had lived, but to denote his dignity and office from God in the present world. But even supposing they could not satisfactorily be proved to have this signification, still we ought to be determined by the general tenor and language of the scriptures, and not by a few obscure phrases. And this is an evidence of the Divine Unity, and of the blessed Jesus being only the creature, the servant, the messenger of God to mankind, by which the unlearned may abide in opposition to all the subtleties, and difficulties which men vainly wise would raise about the different meaning of particular words and phrases, and therein entangle themselves and others; and may
assure

assure themselves that the heavenly Father would not leave a subject of such consequence, as relates to his own unrivalled majesty, and incommunicable glory, and perfections, to be decided by such niceties, but by proofs which every capacity may see clearly, and be perfectly satisfied with them.

V.

It was by taking their opinions from the scriptures only, that at the beginning of the reformation, before Socinus or Socinians were heard of, many plain men of good understandings, and honest inquiring minds, without learning, became Unitarians. And that this plain, self-evident doctrine of the Divine Unity, self evident, I mean, to every unprejudiced reader of the scriptures, would have gone on to spread itself by the powerful force of truth and zeal of its professors, and have brought over the learned to it in a course of time, cannot be doubted, if it had not met with that most barbarous opposition, which it is not ordinarily in the power of human nature to withstand; and which might even have extinguished the gospel at the first preaching, if it had been possible. I mean, the burning its noble martyrs and confessors alive, or burying them out of sight in loathsome prisons, which is far more cruel and savage, and more fatal and adverse to the spreading of the truth, by suppressing mens glorious testimony to it, under the most horrible torments.

So early as the year 1550, says that faithful historian Mr. Strype (*c*); ‘Arianism now shewed itself so openly, and was in such danger of spreading farther, that it was thought necessary to suppress it by using more rugged methods than seemed agreeable to the merciful principles of the gospel.’

The sufferings also of the anabaptists amongst us in this cause, at that time, are well known; particularly of those unfortunate men, who having fled from the Spanish persecution in Flanders, were burnt to death here by the unrelenting order of Q. Elizabeth. But the relation of the manner, in which two of them were executed, given by Brandt, is so calculated to inspire a just horror of such cruelties; and that valuable historian’s own remarks upon it, so well teach the iniquity of all violation of men’s consciences, and of doing the least injury to them, on account of their religious opinions, that I shall insert it at length.

‘At last, says Brandt, on the 22d of July, 1574, the two oldest of the prisoners, *John Peterson* and *Henry Terwoordt*, notwithstanding great application

(*c*) Strype’s *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 214.—One is sorry to observe that Cranmer, Latimer, and Taylor, and others, who were burnt to death in the next reign, were in the commission to try and punish these innocent persons. Id. *ibid*, p. 246.

' application was made for pardon by many of
 ' the most discreet, godly, and learned of the
 ' English and Dutch nations, were executed in
 ' *Smithfield*, a place where the *reformed* used to
 ' be treated in the like manner, being both of
 ' them burnt to ashes at the same stake, without
 ' gunpowder or strangling. They died with great
 ' terror, shrieks, and groans. It is reported of
 ' one of them, that he cried out (*d*) *I acknowledge*
 ' *that Jesus is the Christ, God and man, and born*
 ' *of Mary according to the flesh*, or somewhat to
 ' this purpose; insomuch that had he not been
 ' almost consumed, they would have saved his
 ' life. The oldest, *John Peterson*, was a poor man
 ' fifty years old, with nine children: his first wife
 ' had been burnt at *Gent* for her religion, and
 ' he was now married to another woman, whose
 ' first husband was likewise burnt on the same ac-
 ' count. These things had been fully represented
 ' to the bishop (of *London, Grindal*), and the man
 ' had petitioned for leave to depart with his wife
 ' and children; but all in vain. This severity,
 ' which was not the first that had been practised in
 ' *England*, since the *reformation*, appeared to many
 ' *protestants*,

P 4

(*d*) This shews that the men suffered chiefly for not think-
 ing so highly of Christ, as their persecutors required them
 to do. But the extremity of torture might make the poor
 creature confess any thing, and acknowledge the greatest con-
 tradictions. For assuredly the scorching flames could bring
 no light or conviction to the mind.

' protestants, who were still under the cross in
 ' Flanders and Brabant, both strange and incre-
 ' dible. They lamented that those, who not long
 ' before had been persecuted themselves, were
 ' now harrassing others for the sake of their re-
 ' ligion, and offering violence with fire and sword
 ' to the consciences of other men, though they
 ' had before taught, and that with great truth;
 ' that it did not belong to any mortal man to lord it
 ' over the consciences of others: that faith was
 ' the gift of God, and not to be implanted in the
 ' minds of men by any external force, but by the
 ' word of God, and illumination of the holy Spirit;
 ' that heresy was not a carnal, but a spiritual
 ' crime, and to be punished by God alone: that
 ' error and falsehood was not to be overcome with
 ' violence, but truth: that the obligation which the
 ' children of God lie under, is not to put others to
 ' death for the faith, but to die themselves, in bear-
 ' ing witness to the truth. Lastly, that the shed-
 ' ding of blood for the sake of religion is a mark of
 ' ANTICHRIST, who thereby sets himself in the
 ' judgment seat of God, assuming to himself the do-
 ' minion over conscience, which belongs to none but
 ' God only.' Brandt's History of the Reformation
 in the Low Countries. vol. i. p. 315.

But

VI.

But although it was a work of several centuries to bring off plain ordinary christians, who for a long time adhered to the scriptures and to the practice of the apostles, from the doctrine of the Divine Unity, to believe a Trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ; it will not now require such length of time, under the blessing of divine providence, to bring them back to this grand truth of the bible; now that the art of printing has made books so cheap, and so many are able to read.

And especially rapid is and will be the recovery of this *long lost truth*, and first article of the religion, both of nature, and revelation, that there is but one God, one person, who is God, and no other besides HIM; since, notwithstanding the laws in force, there is no danger of their being put in execution against those who profess a disbelief of the Trinity, and who maintain, that neither Jesus, nor any other person is God, or to be worshiped, but the Father of the universe alone.

Nay, we may add, that the doctrine of the Divine Unity is becoming creditable, upon so many observing and seeing, that there is so much to be said for it, and so little for a multiplication of objects of worship, save the authority of high ecclesiastical

ecclesiastical dignities, and great churches, which weigh nothing in the balance against the truth.

There is one obstacle however, in the way of common christians, which hinders them from so easily arriving at the truth; *viz.* the *false readings* of the scripture still kept up unamended, and the *mistranslations* of our english bible; which, both together, are a very chief support of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the divinity of Christ.

Being persuaded then, that many learned, as well as unlearned, among us, are unacquainted with the true state of the sacred text, especially of the New Testament, with regard to the subject of our inquiry, as it has been recovered and restored by the indefatigable labours of Mill, Bengelius, Weststein, and Griesbach last of all, but not least to be honoured, on account of his singular integrity; and perceiving that few attend to the wrong translations of the bible in our mother-tongue, I shall hope to do an acceptable service, in both these respects, by what follows.

*honest
Griesbach*

False

False readings, or alterations of the words of scripture, in favour of a Trinity of divine persons, and especially of the divinity of Christ, made with design, or through mistake, by copyists or transcribers, before the art of printing was invented.

Acts xx. 28.

False reading.

St. Luke's own words.

<i>— feed the church of God, which he hath pur- chased with his own blood.</i>	<i>— feed the church of the Lord, (viz. Christ) which he hath purchased with his own blood.</i>
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So the best and most antient manuscript copies of the New Testament have it; and it is thus cited by the most antient christian authors.

1 Cor. xv. 47.

False reading.

St. Paul's own words.

<i>The second man is the Lord from heaven.</i>	<i>The second man is from heaven.</i>
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Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ, the Lord, is omitted in some of the best antient manuscripts; in the Coptic, Æthiopic, Vulgate, and Italian versions, and by many antient fathers.

Eph.

Ephesians iii. 9.

False reading.

St. Paul's own words.

— *the mystery, which hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.* — *the mystery which hath been hid in God, who created all things.*

Mr. Locke, upon the place, hath well shewn; that if the words, *by Jesus Christ*, be retained, it is nevertheless, of the *new* creation, or the happy change made in the manners of mankind by the gospel, that the apostle speaks; and not of the natural production of all things. But see a little tract on this passage, and on *the creation of all things* by Jesus Christ, published by the Society for promoting the knowlege of the Scriptures.

Ephesians iii. 19.

False reading.

St. Paul's own words.

— *to know the love (e) of Christ, which passeth knowlege.* — *to know the surpassing love of the knowlege of Christ.*

This

(e) The mystery, spoken of in this chapter, is the secret purpose of God, revealed by Christ, concerning the calling of the heathen world to the knowlege of the gospel, and to eternal life; and the apostle devoutly prays, that the Ephesian

sian

This is the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript. So also Jerom and Austin cite it. See Griesbach upon the place, who scruples not to adopt this reading into the text, as the true one.

I Timothy iii. 16.

False reading.

St. Paul's own words.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, &c.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, which or who was manifest in the flesh.

It

sian christians might be impressed with a proper sense of so immense a benefit, and might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Now this, even according to the common reading, signifies not here any *personal* love of Christ to us, (although doubtless it is in other places justly spoken of) but the love of God to us, manifested by Christ: in the same manner as the apostolic salutation, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all*, does not mean any particular favour or grace of Christ himself to us, but the grace and favour of God revealed by him. But this meaning of the apostle, is still made more plain and apparent by the true order and construction of the words here restored. Vorstius conjectured, that there had been such a transposal of the words, and has this judicious note upon it. In his verbis *trajectio esse potest, quasi dicat apostolus, excellentem Dei charitatem, in ipsa Christi cognitione quæ nobis contigit, elacere. viz.* that the exceeding love of God shone forth in the knowledge of Christ

' It has been a great controversy among learned
 ' men, whether Θεός, *God*, or ες, *who*, or ο *which*
 ' be the true reading in this place. All the old
 ' versions have it *qui, who, or quod, which*. And
 ' all the antient fathers, though the copies of
 ' many of them have it now in the text itself,
 ' Θεός, *Deus, God*; yet from the tenor of their
 ' comments upon it, and from their never citing
 ' it in the arian controversy, it appears they al-
 ' ways read it *qui, who, or quod, which*; till the
 ' time of Macedonius, under the emperor Ana-
 ' stasius, in the beginning of the sixth century.
 ' Of the two passages cited to the contrary by
 ' the learned Dr. Mill, in his appendix; *that*
 ' from Justin Martyr does not prove he did,
 ' but rather that he did not, read it Θεός, *God*;
 ' and *that* from Athanasius, is out of a book
 ' acknowledged to be spurious. *Note*; it must
 ' not be judged from the present copies of the
 ' text, in Nyssen and others, but from their man-
 ' ner of commenting upon the place, how the text
 ' was

hinc

Christ which he had given us. Mr. Locke paraphrases the
 words; ' to understand the exceeding love of God in bring-
 ing us to the knowlege of Christ. And in Tomson's New
 Testament there is this note—*the love of Christ*; i. e. the
 love which God hath shewed us in Christ. I have dwelled
 the longer on this text, because a misapprehension of it hath
 led some to conclude, that Christ must have been of a nature
 superior to man.

‘ was read in their days. In the days of Julian,
 ‘ when that emperor asserted, that *neither Mat-*
 ‘ *thew, Mark, Luke, nor Paul, ever ventured to*
 ‘ *style Christ, God*; it is plain from Cyril’s answer
 ‘ to the assertion of Julian, that even at that time
 ‘ the word ο Θεος, God, was not found in this
 ‘ text.’ Dr. Clarke, Scr. Doct. of Trinity. 88.
 89. Griesbach has a long and excellent note upon
 this place, in his New Testament. Dr. Lardner
 has shewn, in a discourse upon this passage of
 scripture, that if it be read, *God manifest in the*
flesh, there is nothing in the phrase inconsistent
 with the doctrine of the Divine Unity.

1 John iii. 16.

*False reading.**The apostle’s own words.*

<i>Hereby perceive we the</i> <i>love of God, because he</i> <i>laid down his life for us.</i>	<i>Hereby perceive we</i> <i>love, because he laid down</i> <i>his life for us.</i>
---	--

The words, *of God*, are omitted in the Alex-
 andrian and royal Parisian, and other manuscripts;
 in many printed editions of the greek Testament,
 and left out of the text, by Mill, Bengelius,
 Wetstein, Griesbach.

1 John v. 7. 8.

*False reading.**St. John's own words.*

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

For there are three that bear record; the spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

This most justly exploded verse is not found in any greek manuscript of the New Testament, of which we have so many preserved, both in public and private libraries, except in one written in the 15th or 16th century (*f*).

It is wanting in both the syriac versions of the New Testament, though it has crept into some printed

(*f*) With respect to Valla's, and Stephens's manuscripts, which some have lately much insisted on, Wetstein has shewn it to be uncertain whether Valla was possessed of any greek or latin manuscript which contained this verse of the *three witnesses*. He has also proved, that of the seven manuscripts only, which Stephens had, the whole of the verse of the *three witnesses* was wanting in five of them. And the other two manuscripts have never yet been found.

printed editions of the syriac; and is also wanting in all other antient versions.

It is omitted by all the greek fathers; and the traces of it, which some think they have found in them, are merely imaginary.

It is found indeed in latin manuscripts of the New Testament; but in none of them before the tenth century.

The person, who first cited this suspected verse as being really written by the apostle John, was Vigilius Tapsensis, a bishop, who lived about the end of the 5th century: the same person, who most probably forged the creed, which goes about under the name of Athanasius.

But Mr. Emlyn's inquiry into this text of the *three witnesses*, and his reply to a Dutch divine upon it, have established the spuriousness of it so fully as to leave nothing to be added by those that come after him. And in vain has Mr. Travis sought to impeach his integrity, and to elude the force of his arguments.† I am concerned to have cause to remark; that Mr. Emlyn's address (g) to the bishops and clergy, near fourscore years ago, to remove this text out of the bible, has been so little attended to. I shall give you the heads of it. And what has been advanced just now in favour of this spurious text, in two printed tracts; the one, 'A vindication of the doctrine

† Mr. Benson has written a keen & powerful answer to Travis.

trines, and the other, 'An apology for the liturgy 'and clergy of the church of England;' seem to render the arguments and admonitions which it contains, seasonable and proper.

An Address to both houses of Convocation in 1715.

1. 'With all respect, I beseech you to consider as *in the sight of God*; whether there be not sufficient evidence, that *this text*, either *certainly*, or at least very *probably*, never was *originally in the holy writings* of St. John, but unwarrantably *thrust in* of later times. And if so, whether from the conscientious regards you bear to the sacred scriptures, they ought not to be purged of all such *injurious additions*.

2. Whether *such* evidence as is brought against *this verse* before us, would not be judged by *you* sufficient against *any* passage in *any* classic author whatever? Nay, would a *court* of judicature allow any *paragraph* to be good, in a writing of consequence, *for which* no more, and *against which* so much can be fairly said?

3. 'Whether an awful regard to that dreadful *anathema*, or denunciation, left on record by St. John, Rev. xxii. 18. against all who *add* to, or *diminish* from his writings, will permit *you* to be unconcerned in the matter before you?

4. 'Whether

4. ³ Whether the honour and interest of our holy religion, will not be better served by disowning ingenuously what we find to be an error, even though it have long passed as current truth?

5. ⁴ Whether there be any *more evidence* for this text, since the Reformation; when Luther would not put it into any edition of his german bible; and when our old bible, in Henry viii's and Edward vi's time, had these words of the seventh verse, and the words *in earth*, in the eighth in small letters, and sometimes in a parenthesis; to shew that they were not to be esteemed of the same certain authority with the other parts of the epistle, because the manuscripts wanted them?—Yes; the most valuable of all, *The Alexandrian manuscript*, has since that time been brought among us: but alas! *this* has added great weight to the evidence *against it*. Besides, *Erasmus's British copy*, and the *Complutensian Testament*, and the mistake about Stephens's *seven manuscripts*, were not understood to be so void of all weight, as now they appear to be.

6. ⁵ Lastly, The great *importance* of the subject matter of *this* much-doubted text, well deserves your most impartial judgment upon it.—There can no doubt be made, but the common people think *some* branches of the *Liturgy* have their main foundation on this one doubted text. When they hear *Three persons and one God*, in

the *fourth* petition of the *Litany*; and, *who with thee and the holy ghost ever liveth and reigneth one God*, in the *Doxologies*; they think nothing in the *New Testament* so like it as this *dubious text*. And will you not think it great pity, that your people should build so weighty things on such a slender foundation, if yourselves so judge of it?

‘ I speak this, because I know not any *other text* that *directly* or *clearly* says the *same thing*, viz. that *the Father, Word, and Spirit are one*. They are not joined in one *doxology*, nor indeed do I find any *doxology* given to the *Holy Spirit*, in the *New Testament*, either jointly or separately; much less is the *Spirit* said to be *one with the Father and the Son*. I read of *one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father*, Eph. iv. but not that *these three are one*. And if there be no *other text* which says this, it is not the *more likely* to have been *St. John’s* saying here; but the *more grievous* to have it inserted by any who had not *his authority*.

‘ Whether, upon the whole, this *passage* shall by your direction, in our *printed books*, be fairly *disowned* and *marked* as formerly, or better *vindicated*, I know not: but if *neither* of *these* be done, and if preachers and writers still go on, without due regard to *justice* and *their own estimation*, to urge this as an authority, after all that is said to shew it has none; I apprehend, there are many understanding

understanding christians, who will be apt to think they are not fairly dealt with.

1 John v. 20.

False reading.

The apostle's own words.

We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true. And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know the true God. And we are in him (e) that is the true (God) by his Son Jesus Christ. This (f) is the true God, and eternal life.

Q3

This

(e) — *by his Son Jesus Christ*] Our old english version has well rendered the words; *and we are in him that is true*, by *his Son Jesus Christ*. The proposition „ has so frequently this signification, that there is no occasion to refer to particular instances.

(f) *This is the true God, and eternal life.*] Dr. Clarke remarks, that no writer before the time of the council of Nice, for the first 300 years, ever interprets these words concerning Christ. And the obvious meaning of this abridged way of speaking, common to the apostle with his divine master, is, *This is the true God, and the author of eternal life*. So Christ says of himself, John xi. 25. *I am the life*, i. e. the author of it, the instrument of bringing mankind to eternal life.

This is the reading of the Alexandrian and other manuscript copies, and it is found in several of the fathers, and many antient versions of the New Testament. Our countryman, Dr Hammond, approves it. Dr. Whitby receives it, and well remarks, 'that thus the disciple accords with his Master, *This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God*, John xvii. 3; and, 'only teacheth what he had learnt from him.' *Last Thoughts*, &c. p. 86,

Jude xxv.

*False reading.**The apostle's own words.*

<i>To the only wise God,</i>	<i>To the only God, our</i>
<i>our Saviour, be glory and</i>	<i>Saviour, through Jesus</i>
<i>majesty, dominion and</i>	<i>Christ our Lord, be glory</i>
<i>power, both now and for</i>	<i>and majesty, dominion and</i>
<i>ever.</i>	<i>power, both now and for</i>
	<i>ever.</i>

This is the reading of the Alexandrian, Vatican and royal Parisian manuscript copies of the New Testament; of both the Syriac, the Arabian and Coptic versions, and of the Vulgate, which is held authentic in the church of Rome. Father Simon accordingly renders it; *A Dieu seul, nôtre Sauveur, par Jesus Christ nôtre seigneur, appartient la gloire, la magnificence, l'empire, et la puissance*

fance avant tous les tems, maintenant, et pour toujours. Griesbach, without hesitation, adopts this reading into the text. That honest man and most worthy divine, archbishop Tillotson (*b*), declares his approbation of it. His words I have put in the margin. And they may teach some persons, that Jesus Christ being called *our Saviour* as well as Almighty God, is no proof of the divinity of the former: he being only the instrument employed under God, the original Saviour, or author of our salvation.

Q 4

False

(*b*) Tillotson's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 619. on Jude xxv.
 * Before I pass on to the other particulars contained in these
 * words, I cannot but take notice, that this *wise God*, here
 * spoken of, is stiled, *our Saviour*, which some understand
 * of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and bring this as an argument
 * to prove his divinity.—But although I would not willingly
 * part with any place, that may be fairly brought for
 * the proof of the divinity of Christ, yet seeing there are so
 * many plain texts in scripture for the proof of it, we have
 * the less reason to stretch doubtful places; and that this is
 * so, will appear to any one, who considers, that the title of
 * *Saviour* is several times in scripture attributed to God the
 * Father; besides that in a very antient and authentic copy
 * we find the words read somewhat otherwise, and so as to put
 * this verse out of all controversy, *μονο θεω, σωτηρ ημων, &c.*
 * *Ιηου Χριστου, σωτηρ ημων, δεξα, &c.* To the only God, our Saviour, &c.' N. B. Those many texts, which this truly good man imagined to prove the divinity of Christ, have been often shewn to prove nothing of the sort.

False reading.

St. John's own words.

—saying, I am alpha and omega, the first and the last; and *what thou seest, write in a book.*

This is the reading of the Alexandrian, Vatican, and royal Parisian manuscript copies of the new Testament, with many others; and also of the most antient versions. The true reading is restored in the edition of the greek new Testament, at Vienna, by the printer to the emperor, whilst Hardy, in England, holds forth the spurious reading as genuine, to our youths, who make use of his new Testament. It is well known, that Dr. Doddridge professes, that this text, more than any other in the bible, but which really makes no part of the bible, prevented him from believing Jesus Christ to have been a creature. See

Griesbach

MISTRANSLATIONS in our English bible, favouring the doctrine of a Trinity, and of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

General Remarks.

I.

Throughout the bible, *ghost*, holy *ghost*, to be changed into *spirit*, holy *spirit*; because the term *ghost* countenances the ignorance and prejudices of many, who imagine that thereby is to be understood a divine person, distinct from God, and not the divine extraordinary power or influence.

II.

Throughout the bible, where mention is made of *worshiping* Christ, to change it into bowing down, *doing homage*, or *paying respect* to him; because the word, in english, misleads inconsiderate readers to imagine, that it is religious worship that is paid to Christ; and thence to conclude him to be *God*. Whereas, by the same argument, it might be maintained, that the apostle Peter was *God*; because (Acts x. 25.) the roman officer Cornelius *worshiped* him.

Isaiah

Isaiah ix. 6.

Instead of

read

<i>Unto us a child is born,</i>	<i>Unto us a child is born,</i>
<i>unto us a Son is given;</i>	<i>unto us a Son is given;</i>
<i>and the government shall</i>	<i>and the government shall</i>
<i>be upon his shoulder; and</i>	<i>be upon his shoulder: and</i>
<i>his name shall be called,</i>	<i>his name shall be called,</i>
<i>wonderful, counsellor, the</i>	<i>the messenger of the</i>
<i>mighty God, the ever-</i>	<i>great design; the father</i>
<i>lasting Father, the prince</i>	<i>of the age; the prince</i>
<i>of peace.</i>	<i>of peace.</i>

In Commentaries and Essays, published by the Society for promoting the knowlege of the Scriptures, by a Layman:† this translation of the passage is given, and justified with great learning and force of evidence. Vol. i. p. 171. and 243.

— liii. 8.

Instead of

read

<i>He was taken from</i>	<i>In his humiliation his</i>
<i>prison, and from judg-</i>	<i>condemnation was ex-</i>
<i>ment, and who shall de-</i>	<i>torted, and the men of</i>
<i>clare his (i) generation?</i>	<i>his generation who shall</i>
	<i>be</i>

(i) Our faulty english version, *who shall declare his generation?* as referring to something mysterious and extraordinary in the circumstances of Christ's origin, had most probably Justin Martyr * for it's author; who having been a
heathen

* Justin. Op. p. 73. 139. 160. 166.

† who has since published the whole of
Isaiah, in 1801. 8vo. (H. Dodson
Edg?)

For he was cut off out of *by them* be able to describe? for
 the land of the living; his life was cut off from
 for the transgression of my the earth; through the
 people was he stricken. wickedness of my peo-
 ple he was smitten to
 death.

The able hand, just now mentioned, p. 36.
 hath abundantly vindicated the translation here
 given; and hath shewn with what exactness the
 passage, in it's several parts, applies to the cha-
 racter and sufferings of the future messiah.

Jeremiah xxiii. 6.

Instead of read

This is the name *This is the name by*
whereby he shall be *which the Lord shall*
called, the LORD our *call him, our righteous-*
righteousness. *ness.*

' Rendered literally, according to the hebrew
 ' idiom, it would be, *And this is his name, by*
 ' *which the Lord shall call our righteousness; a*
 ' phrase exactly the same as, *And the Lord shall*
 ' *call him so; which, as I have observed in note*
 on

heathen and philosopher before his conversion, grafted many
 of his heathen philosophic notions upon the bible. He has
 been shewn above to have been the first inventor of the doc-
 trine of Christ's preexistence.

• on chap. xx. 3. implies that God would make
 • him so as he called him, that is, *our righte-*
 • *ousness*, or the author and means of our salva-
 • vation and acceptance. So by the same figure
 • of speech, Christ is said to have been *made of*
 • *God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanc-*
 • *tification and redemption.* 1 Cor. x. 30.

This is the version, and explanation of a learned, valuable critic. What he farther adds with great liberality, and singular integrity, may not be omitted.

• I doubt not but some persons will be offended with me for depriving them by this translation of a favourite argument for proving the divinity of our Saviour from the Old Testament. But I cannot help it: I have done it with no ill design, but purely because I think, and am morally sure, that the text, as it stands, will not properly admit of any other construction. The LXX (*viz.* those who turned the old Testament out of hebrew into greek 200 years before Christ) have so translated before me, in an age, when there could not possibly be any bias of prejudice, either for or against the before-mentioned doctrine; a doctrine, which draws it's decisive proofs from the New Testament only.

Notes on Jeremiah, page 146. by Dr. Blayney, Oxford, 1784.

*So again ch. 33. 16. "This is the
 "whom Jehovah shall call, Our
 "Righteousness."*

Hosea

Hosea i. 7:

Instead of

read

I will save them by the LORD their God. *I will save them by myself.*

It is a known peculiarity of the hebrew writers, sometimes to repeat the noun instead of substituting the pronoun for it. Thus, 1 Kings viii. 1. *Solomon assembled the elders of Israel unto king Solomon,* instead of *unto himself*. It would not have been needful to mention this here, if this passage from Hosea had not been cited (*k*) as a proof that Christ is Jehovah God; and been interpreted, as if Almighty God had there said, that *he would save men* by another Almighty God; which other Almighty God, they say, is Christ. And in proof of it, Mr. Robinson of Cambridge produces this text; as he also cites the miserable translation of Isaiah ix. 6. in proof of Christ being the *everlasting Father*. I mention these things, that this ingenious man, who is said now to be far from embracing such polytheism, may do what

(*k*) "Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, p. 12. 15. in a pastoral letter addressed to a congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Cambridge, 1776." This work has passed through several editions. See an *Examination* of it, p. 31. 37. &c.

is in his power to recover those whom he has led into or confirmed in such gross errors.

Zechariah xii. 10.

Instead of

read

— *they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced.* — *they shall look on him, whom they have pierced.*

Bishop Newcome (1) proves this by a variety of evidence, to have been the true reading, which he adopts into the text; and mentions particularly that Dr. Owen shews that Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Barnabas favour it. The passage however is to this day cited by many as spoken by the Almighty Being concerning himself, and as a proof that Jesus, whom the soldier (John xix. 34, &c.) pierced with a spear, was (*strange to think of*) Jehovah, the most high God.—See the Examination of Mr. Robinson's Plea, &c. p. 94.

(1) An attempt towards an improved version, a metrical arrangement, and an explanation of the twelve minor prophets, p. 207. 208.

Zechariah

Zechariah xiii. 7.

Instead of

read

<i>Awake, O sword, a- gainst my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.</i>	<i>Awake, O sword, a- gainst my shepherd, and against the man who is near unto me; saith Je- hovah God of hosts.</i>
--	---

This reading is adopted by bishop Newcome, in agreement with Theodotion, and the interpretation of Junius and Tremellius, &c.

From our wrong translation of the prophet's words, many persons (*m*) would infer, that the Almighty being here declares Christ's equality to himself; that he was his fellow-God.

Matthew xii. 31.

Instead of

read

<i>But the blasphemy a- gainst the holy ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.</i>	<i>But the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.</i>
--	---

Our translators have inserted, the words *the holy*, to make out what they imagined to be the true meaning, viz. that a Divine Person, which they call the Holy Ghost, was here intended to be

(*m*) See an Examination of Mr. Robinson's Plea, &c. p. 110.

be mentioned by Christ. But if they had strictly attended to his words only, they would have seen, that the *blasphemy*, or speaking evil of the *spirit*, was nothing more than the speaking evil of the divine power, by which Christ wrought his miracles, in alleging, that he received this power from an evil being, and not from God.

John i. 1. 14.

Instead of read

<i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.</i>	<i>In the beginning was Wisdom, and Wisdom was with God, and God was Wisdom. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it was nothing made, In it was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.</i>
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<i>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same</i>	<i>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came</i>
---	--

came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which came into the world, and enlighteneth every man.

It (Divine Wisdom) was in the world, and the world was made by it, and the world knew it not. It came to its own land, and its own people received it not. But as many as received, it, to them it gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on its name. Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

R

And

<i>And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.</i>	<i>And Wisdom became man, and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, the glory as of the well beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth.</i>
--	--

It has been proved in the former part of this work, that this rendering of the term *logos*, which we translate *Word*, by *Wisdom*, is just, and proper, and pointed out by the scripture itself. For all writers, antient and modern, agree in their sentiments, that St. John alludes to Solomon's description of *Wisdom*, Prov. viii. although the greater part of them have given a wrong turn to and construction of this *logos*, *Word* or *Wisdom*, and have made it a divine person, another God; of which, as has been shewn, Solomon knew nothing. Neither had St. John any idea of so monstrous a thing, as another God, monstrous to a Jew; but intended only, after Solomon's manner, to describe the one, eternal, almighty Being, by his attribute of *Wisdom*, the better to declare, and in a more striking way, that the gifts of a divine wisdom and power were in a most extraordinary degree communicated to Christ, so that *Wisdom*, (*Divine Wisdom*) might be said to
become

become man, and to dwell among us in the person of the holy Jesus.

And this surely was a very proper preface and introduction to his history of Christ, and a very satisfactory account why the apostle chose to begin it in this singular manner.

That the evangelist could not possibly intend to hold forth Christ under the name, *logos*, *Word*, *Wisdom*, as a preexistent being, and second God, has been shewn;

1. By his never speaking concerning Christ, nor ever introducing Christ speaking of himself, that he had ever existed in a former state as God:

2. But on the contrary, he describes Christ uniformly as a man, like others; and particularly, after our Lord's resurrection and exaltation in heaven, this apostle joins with all his fellow-apostles, in declaring Jesus to have been one of the human race, and of their own nation, with extraordinary powers, and credentials from almighty God, as a prophet; and repeatedly, as his highest title as it were, John and the other apostles stile their divine master, *God's servant*. Acts ii. 14. 22. iii. 11. 12. 13. 14. iv. 24. 27.

So that we have full demonstration, that the evangelist, St. John, did not believe his divine master to be any other than a human creature; and therefore never could intend to speak of him

here as a preexistent being; as another, and second God.

This notion of Christ, as being a second God and creator, was first brought in among christians by heathen converts, from their philosophy; and it has been shewn, that most probably Justin Martyr, a good man, but addicted to Plato's sect, and of a warm imagination, was the inventor of it; and by him, almost from the beginning, the christian world has been misled.

Other arguments have been produced in the former chapter of this book, but these I hope will suffice to eradicate this inveterate deep-rooted prejudice, that St. John here treats of Christ as the logos, and a God, *next* to the one supreme, or *equal* to him: for this is the principal passage that contributes to keep up such polytheism, by common readers unfortunately imagining, and taking for granted, that Christ is the Word or Wisdom of God, which is himself, by which he is denominated.

John i. 15.

Instead of

read

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying; This is he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me, is preferred before me: for
John bare witness of him, saying; This is he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for
be

*before me: for he was he was greater than
before me. me.*

John i. 30.

*This is he of whom I This is he of whom I
said; after me cometh a said: After me cometh
man, who is preferred be- a man who is preferred
fore me: for he was be- before me: for he was
fore me. greater than me.*

The baptist is here speaking only of the superior dignity of Christ's office to his own, and not of any prior existence. And this is the proper sense of the words. See Matth. iii. 11. Mark i. 7. Luke iii. 16.

John i. 14.

Instead of read

*— we beheld his glory, We beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only- the glory as of the belov-
begotten of the Father. ed of the Father.*

— 18.

*No man hath seen God No man hath seen God
at any time: the only- at any time: the belov-
begotten Son, who is in ed Son, who is in the
the bosom of the Father; bosom of the Father, he
he hath declared him. hath declared him.*

Monogenes, *only begotten*, as our translation has it; is properly *an only son*. And because such are for the most part, greatly loved, thence the word is transferred to signify *beloved*, *most beloved*. And Mr. Whiston, (*n*) has shewn in a valuable remark on this word, that St. John most probably borrowed it, in this sense, from the greek translation of the hebrew scriptures which was then in use.

Only begotten is certainly most gross and improper language to be used in english; especially with respect to the Deity. It was probably adopted by our translators, and is certainly understood by the generality of their readers, as implying some *singular* and *eternal generation* of Jesus Christ, before he became a man. But there is nothing advanced by St. John that can lead any one to such an idea concerning Christ.

John iii, 18.

Instead of

read

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish.	For God so loved the world, that he gave his beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish.
--	--

John

(*n*) Whiston's Sermons, p. 309, 310. See also Sequel to an Apology for resigning the vicarage of Carterick, p. 159, 160. note.

John v. 18.

Instead of

read

<i>Therefore the jews</i>	<i>Therefore the jews</i>
<i>sought the more to kill</i>	<i>sought the more to kill</i>
<i>him, because he not only</i>	<i>him, because he not only</i>
<i>had broken the sabbath,</i>	<i>had broken the sabbath,</i>
<i>but had said that God was</i>	<i>but had said that God was</i>
<i>his Father, making him-</i>	<i>his Father, making him-</i>
<i>self equal with God.</i>	<i>self like unto God.</i>

That this is a just translation (o) of the original, cannot be questioned. It is only produced because many readers are led, from the present translation, to fancy, that there was something said by our Saviour, which the jews interpreted to imply his being equal with God, and they too readily think it was so. But although christians, through the habit of hearing such a thing from their childhood, are not shocked at the thought of a human creature like Christ being equal to God, it was an idea that could never enter into the

(o) Our translators have fallen into a similar mistake in Luke xx. 36; where *ισαγγελοι* should be rendered, not *equal*, but *like unto the angels*. For it is not an equality to those heavenly beings, in rank and faculties, which our Lord here authorizes his virtuous and sincere followers to expect immediately in the future world, at the resurrection; but only a more perfect, and unperishing condition of being.

the mind of a jew. What they laid to our Lord's charge, was, his assuming, not an equality to, but an authority from, God, as their Messiah; which they denied him to be.

John. vi. 33.

Instead of read

<i>For the bread of God</i>	<i>For the bread of God</i>
<i>is he which cometh down</i>	<i>is that which cometh</i>
<i>from heaven, and giveth</i>	<i>down from heaven, and</i>
<i>life unto the world.</i>	<i>giveth life unto the world.</i>

The reply made to these words of Christ, shews that this is the proper translation of them; viz. ver. 34. *Then said they unto him; Lord, evermore give us this bread.* And it shews among many other proofs, that our Lord spoke of his doctrine, (i. e. *the bread of God*) and of himself, *coming down from heaven*, in the same sense; i. e. as having both a divine authority,

John viii. 58.

Instead of read

<i>Before Abraham was,</i>	<i>Before Abraham was,</i>
<i>I am,</i>	<i>I am the light of the</i>
	<i>world.</i>

It

It has been shewn by several most judicious christians, that our Saviour's words, as the evangelist puts them, are thus to be supplied; as he unquestionably refers to something he had said before, declaratory of his true character from God, of his being the Messiah or the Christ; and most probably to what is recorded ver. 12.

So that here is a full end put to that most groundless conclusion commonly made from these words; *contrary* to grammar; *contrary* to common sense; *contrary* to the words of Moses, to which allusion is supposed to be made, as translated by the LXX; viz. that our Lord should here declare himself to be, the *ὁ ὢν*, I AM, *the self-existent, eternal God.*

John xviii. 3.

Instead of

read

This is life eternal, This is life eternal, that they might know that they may know Thee, the only true God, to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom, and Jesus to be the thou hast sent. Christ, whom thou hast sent.

In both the clauses of this sentence, the infinitive *εἶναι*, to be, is understood. And *Χριστος*, Christ, is certainly not a proper name, but a name of office:

office: viz. the anointed prophet, the Christ, the Messiah. *so Mr Clarke of Worcester is of opinion*

And the most unlearned, if he has the understanding of a human creature, and will give attention without prejudice to what he reads, may easily perceive for himself, from these words of Christ;

1. That there is but *one true God*, one single person who is this *true God*, denoted to be such by the pronouns, *Thee, Thou*, which cannot signify more than one person. And,

2. That the holy Jesus is expressly and particularly excluded from being *the true God*, and contradistinguished from HIM, by being called the Christ, *i. e.* the anointed prophet, and also the messenger of *the true God*.

There is moreover a conclusion of the greatest moment, most plainly and evidently to be deduced from these words of our Lord, in his devout prayer for himself and his disciples; *namely*, that the blessed Jesus, our lord and master, in addressing the Father, as the only true God, whose messenger at the same time he calls himself, teaches us; that whoever worships any other person besides the Father; whoever worships either himself, or the Holy Spirit, worships a *false god*. For if the Father be the only true God, all others, in our Saviour's own account and estimate, must be *false gods*.

I cannot

I cannot refrain here from inserting a passage out of the excellent Tillotson's Sermons.

' Prayer is a proper act of religious worship,
' and therefore peculiar to God alone; and we
' are commanded to *worship the Lord our God,*
' *and serve him only.* And no where in scripture
' are we directed to address our prayers, and
' supplications, and thanksgivings to any but
' God *alone*, and only in the name and mediation
' of Jesus Christ. Our blessed Saviour himself
' hath taught us, to put up all our prayers to
' God, our heavenly Father, Luke xi. 2. *When*
' *you pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven.*
' Which plainly shews to whom our prayers are
' to be addressed; and unless we can call *an angel,*
' or the *blessed virgin,* or a *saint,* (he might have
' added) or *Jesus Christ,* our Father; we can pray
' to none of them. Tillotson, vol. ii. p. 132.

N. B. I should not have thought of mentioning this inconsiderable amendment of our present english translation of this text, or have added these remarks, but for the sad perversion of our Saviour's words, made by so good and learned a man as bishop Pearce. In half a century, whoever lives to see it, if not sooner, our successors will wonder that it should have been necessary to refute such absurdities;

John

John xvii. 24.

Instead of read

Father, I will, that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am. *Father, I desire, that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am.*

This may seem to some a trifling emendation. But as the version now stands, many english readers apprehend Christ to be speaking to God as his equal: whereas it is truly the language of a supplicant, dependent creature, addressing his Father, and his God; yet with conscious (p) satisfaction of having done his duty, and approved himself to him, and thence deriving an undoubting, pleasing expectation of having his prayer heard.

Acts iii. 13. 26.

— iv. 27. 30.

Instead of read

The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus. *The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his servant Jesus.*

Unto

(p) *I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me, &c. ver. 4. 5.*

Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you. Unto you first, God having raised up his servant Jesus, sent him to bless you.

For of a truth against the holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For of a truth against the holy servant Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

— that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

— that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy servant Jesus.

No scholar but must allow the justness of the translation in these passages.

It is observable, that the same word, which is rendered, ch. iv. ver. 25. *by the mouth*, *παιδος ου*, of thy servant David, is immediately afterwards, ver. 27. rendered, *thy holy*, *παιδος ου*, CHILD, when applied to Christ. This shews what a bias our translators lay under, and how afraid they were of calling Jesus God's *servant*. And yet if their prejudices would have allowed them any freedom of thought and inquiry; they would have found, that it was a name, which our Lord most frequently took

took to himself, and most unquestionably held it his highest honour to be God's especial servant, employed on his most benevolent designs. For his general language concerning himself, was, that he was *sent* of God, one whom the Father *sent*; i. e. his messenger, his servant.

Acts iii. 14. 15.

Instead of

read

<i>But ye denied the holy one, and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead.</i>	<i>But ye denied that holy and just person, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the guide to life, whom God hath raised from the dead.</i>
---	---

How most preposterously some persons, even in our own days, from these two verses ill understood, would conclude Christ to be the eternal God, hath been intimated in the foregoing chapter of this work.

Acts vii. 59.

Instead of

read

<i>And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.</i>	<i>And they stoned Stephen, calling upon Jesus, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.</i>
---	---

Our

Our translators have inserted the word *God*, of their own accord: for what reason it is hard to say, unless to take the opportunity of declaring, that Christ was, as they imagined, in this passage taught to be God, by prayer being made to him.

If any word be inserted, it should be Jesus, as I have done, to compleat the sense in english. After what has been remarked elsewhere, to satisfy the reader here that this single invocation of Christ does not imply him to be any thing above a human creature, highly exalted in favour with God, I shall subjoin a remark upon it, in a work (*q*) which has lately appeared, and which deserves the serious attention of the public.

‘ In this vision, Stephen beholding Jesus in
 ‘ that station of glory, by God’s right hand, might
 ‘ call upon his master Christ to save or to receive
 ‘ his spirit. Seeing Christ in heaven, and know-
 ‘ ing Christ’s power with God, was as good a
 ‘ reason for Stephen to call for, and desire his
 ‘ help, as it was for his disciples, who saw his
 ‘ power on earth, to call to him to save them *in*
 ‘ a storm, Matt. viii. 24—27. Yet Stephen’s ex-
 ample

(*q*) The scripture account of the attributes and worship of God; and of the character and offices of Jesus Christ, p. 152. By Hopton Haynes, Esq. Assay-master of the Mint. Printed for Johnson, 1790,

ample is to others no rule, unless they are encouraged by a like vision. We are not to depart from general rules of duty, and justify our practice, by a single, and extraordinary instance and example.'

Acts ix. 14. 21.

Instead of

read

And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that are called by thy name, or that appeal to thy name.

And all that heard him were amazed, and said; is not this he which destroyed them that called on this name.

And all that heard him were amazed, and said; is not this he who destroyed them that were called by this name, or appealed to this name.

That this is the proper rendering and sense of the words, hath been shewn in the former part of this work, and elsewhere, by myself, and others.

St. Luke's own words, a little before, might have led our translators into this their true meaning, if their prejudices had not made them too eager to lay hold of any thing that had the appearance of making Christ to be God. and the
object

object of religious worship: For in the same breath, as it were, at ver. 2. of this chapter, the sacred historian expresses the very same thing only in different words; viz. that if Saul found any of this way ^{sect} he was to bring them bound to Jerusalem: any of this way ^{sect} answers to any called by this name, i. e. any christians.

Our historian, moreover, could never intend to represent christians, as a class of men distinguished by calling upon or invoking the name of Christ, the founder of their religion, in prayer: because neither in his first treatise, in which he gives a history of Christ, nor in his second treatise, *The Acts*, does he ever denominate Christ God, or an object of worship: but on the contrary, throughout both, describes him as a creature of God, one of the human race; who offered up his devotions continually to God, the Father of himself and of all mankind, and directed all others to pray to the Father only.

1 Cor. i. 2.

Instead of

read

— with all that, in every place, call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

— with all that, in every place, are called by, or appealed to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Hammond saw the mistake of our english translation in this instance, and has inserted a valuable note to confirm his own sentiment, that it should be read, not *that call upon*, but that are called by *the name* of Christ. He very properly styles this language of the apostle 'a *periphrasis* of christians;' viz. a way of speaking, where many words are used to express the sense of one.

This instance of wrong translation is inserted a little out of its course, on account of its connection with the foregoing.

Acts xvii. 29.

Instead of *that call upon* read

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, or graven by art, and man's device.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Being is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, or graven by art, and man's device.

This is an exact translation of the word in the original, used by the apostle. And hence it follows, that THE DIVINE BEING is a proper scriptural name of God, when we are speaking of him.

The

The strange word, *godhead*, is therefore by all means to be discarded; and the more, as being supposed to denote the divine nature or essence, about which the scriptures are wholly silent, it gives countenance to the doctrine of what is called *Three persons*, or a *Trinity of persons* in the godhead; which is a language assuredly as unscriptural as it is unintelligible.

Acts xx. 28.

Instead of

read

— *feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

— *feed the church of the Lord (i. e. Christ) which he hath purchased with his own blood: or*

— *feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son.*

These readings, the one or the other of them, are favoured by the best or most antient manuscript copies of the New Testament. Wetstein shews that Chrysostom and Athanasius, the great patrons of orthodoxy in the fourth century, reprobated the use of such shocking language, as the *blood* of God; and hence we may be assured that the reading in our english translation was not then known.

Romans i. 3.

Instead of read

— concerning his Son,	— concerning his Son
Jesus Christ our Lord;	Jesus Christ our Lord;
who was made of the seed	who was made of the seed
of David according to the	of David by natural de-
flesh, and declared to be	scend, and declared to
the Son of God with pow-	be the Son of God with
er, according to the spirit	power, according to the
of holiness, by the resur-	spirit of holiness, by the
rection from the dead.	resurrection from the dead.

By *natural descent* will be found a more just translation, and a fitter representation of the apostle's words than the literal rendering of them, *according to the flesh*. For idioms and peculiarities of speech can seldom bear being turned, word for word, out of one language into another; but will appear harsh, and often obscure the sense. Thus the common salutation in French, *comment vous portez vous?* which in the literal rendering is, *how do you carry yourself?* would hardly be intelligible in English. And so here, *according to the flesh*, though by use we can endure it, and fix some meaning to it, 'tis nevertheless most uncouth, and the sense is much better expressed by the term, *natural descent*.

But

But there is another reason for changing our present translation; because it tends to mislead persons with respect to the person of Christ. For this phrase, of the seed of David *according to the flesh*, is generally interpreted to mean, *according to his human nature*; as though it implied that Christ had another nature, besides that which he derived by his descent from David. But whatever meaning others may put upon his words, it is certain St. Paul never intended any such matter by them. For a little farther on in this epistle (ix. 3.) he styles the jews, my kinsmen *according to the flesh*. So that we have as good grounds from such language to infer, that Paul had another nature besides his human nature, as that our Saviour had. In the passage before us there is no reference to any two imaginary natures, but to the two different conditions of Christ; as a mortal man, like others of the human race, and as distinguished and fitted for his high office as prophet of the christian church, and teacher of the divine will to men, by gifts of the holy Spirit, and by being in an extraordinary manner raised from the dead, by Almighty God.

Romans i. 20.

Instead of

read

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and providence.

Common english readers are so tinctured with the notion, that this word, *godhead*, signifies the divine nature admitting a multiplicity of persons, that on that account it ought to be excluded the scriptures, as well as for its being wholly unintelligible. *Θεϊσμός*, in the apostle's idea here, probably meant the divine sovereign dominion, his providence.

Romans ix. 5.

Instead of

read

— of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Of whom, by natural descent, Christ came. God, who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen.

Our

Our translators would have hesitated in applying this language to Christ, if their minds had been sufficiently unbiaſſed, and at liberty to examine the ſtrong arguments which there are for the apoſtle's intending to ſpeak of God only.

1. For firſt, the early chriſtian writers, who were but too much diſpoſed to exalt the perſon of Chriſt, did not underſtand theſe words as ſpoken of him. Some of them pronounce it to be raſhneſs and impiety, to ſay that Chriſt was the God over all, which they would not have done if this paſſage had belonged to him; others affirm, that no pious perſon could uſe ſuch language concerning Chriſt. Dr. Clarke Scrip. Doctr. p. 85, &c.

2. This that is here adopted as the true reading, is probably the way in which thoſe antients read the paſſage. For the beſt critics have obſerved, that the words will full as well admit this conſtruction as the other: the verb, *εἰμι*, *be*, on other occaſions being left to be ſupplied. See Matt. xv.

15.

3. It is alſo obſerved, that in all other places the term *εὐλογητός*, *blessed*, is appropriated to the Father only: and when at any time Chriſt is ſaid to be *εὐλογημένος*, *blessed*, as Matth. xxi. 9, &c. it is quite another thing.

4. It remains therefore that the words in queſtion, are to be read, *God, who is over all, be bleſſed for ever*; and are to be underſtood,

as a sudden pious thought, and ejaculation of the apostle's to almighty God, struck with admiration of the divine goodness in the subject before him. And this is rendered the more probable, by its being consonant to the apostle's manner of writing, to interrupt the matter he is treating of, by breaking forth into such devout strains. Thus Eph. i. 3. immediately after his salutation of them, he strikes out; "*blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ*"; and not long after, in the same epistle, iii. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do for us abundantly, above all that we can do or think, &c.* See also Rom. i. 25. xi. 16. 2 Cor. i. 3. xi. 31.

I should think these arguments must be sufficiently convincing to all, that St. Paul in this place is far from styling Christ, *God over all*. But I would also wish the reader to make use of his own understanding, and consider, whether the apostle, whether any man, in the use of his reason, could advance such a contradiction, as in the same sentence, to call Christ the most high God, and also a jew lineally descended from jews: for this last is the meaning of the words of *whom as concerning the flesh Christ came*,

*See Gualtherus's Reasons by
Mr. Friend. p. 13.* 1 Cor.

1 Corinthians ii. 14.

Instead of

read

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him.

But the animal man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him.

This passage, as it stands in our english translation, has been, and still is made use of, to insinuate, that men are not to trust to their reason in interpreting the scripture, or that in the use of their reason they cannot properly judge of the things contained in the scripture: whereas ψυχικός properly signifies the man who follows his animal propensities and inclinations, and not his reason; which is God's natural gift to us, and that faculty whereby we are to judge of any extraordinary or revealed light that he affords us.

1 Corinthians x. 9.

Instead of

read

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted.

Neither let us tempt the Lord (or God) as some of them also tempted.

The

The best manuscript copies of the New Testament favour one or other of these readings, with other important authorities. I put bishop Pearce's note (r) in the margin. See also Sequel to an Apology for resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, p. 261.

Galatians iv. 4.

Instead of read

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. *When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

Sent forth, the same as sent from God, John i. 6. xvii. 18: *i. e.* having a divine commission. St. Paul then says here, that at his appointed time, the Almighty gave a commission to Jesus, the son of Mary, of a jewish family, subject to the law of Moses. Beausobre renders it, Dieu a envoyé son Fils, né d' une femme, et assujetti à la loi.

Ephesians

(r) The Alexandrian manuscript (ex emendatione, says Wettstein) with the Æthiopian version read here, θεος, God, not Χριστος, Christ, which first reading Grotius highly approves of: and I am not against his opinion, because (there being no accusative after *παρκατα* in the next sentence) θεος, God, seems better understood there than Χριστος, Christ. However, some other MSS. and fathers read κυριος, Lord, which perhaps was the true reading; and being by some thought to mean Christ, was changed into Χριστος, and by others, who thought it meant God, was changed into θεος. Pearce in loc.

Ephesians iv. 32.

Instead of

read

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, by Christ, hath forgiven you.

This is the proper meaning of the preposition *in*, in this place. God is never said to forgive any one for Christ's sake, but out of his own benignity and kindness, without the interference of Christ, or of any other person.

Colossians ii. 9.

Instead of

read

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the deity bodily.

In Ephesians iii. 19, our apostle prays that the christians to whom he writes *might be filled with all the fulness of God*. The *fulness* spoken of in both cases, that of Christ, and that of christians his followers, was from the communication of divine powers to each; though to Christ, as it is expressed, John iii. 34. *God gave the spirit without measure.*

For

For reasons above-mentioned, the scholastic word, *godhead*, is rejected, because to common readers it countenances the strange notion of a God consisting of three persons.

Philippians ii. 5, &c.

This is the famous passage, which in our common translation, speaks of *Christ Jesus being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, and taking upon him the form of a servant*; which on account of the various mistakes about it, I shall consider more particularly.

Many understand it to be expressive of Christ's humility in leaving a glorious condition of being, in which he had existed before all ages, either as the supreme God, or the creator of all things under him, and condescending to animate a human body, and so to become man.

But as, throughout the scriptures, we never find, that Christ himself claimed any respect from men, for any thing that he had been before he was born; and his apostles never elsewhere refer us to such an extraordinary instance of humility, as that of leaving another world to come into this, there is reason to hesitate, and to suspect, that nothing of the sort is intended here. For it is a circumstance of that magnitude, and so much to their master's honour, that if it had been really so, we can hardly

hardly imagine that they would have taken such small notice of it; but would have been frequently introducing and dwelling upon it.

For this, and various reasons besides, others have explained the apostle's words here, and more justly, as it appears to me, as declaratory of our Lord's humility in the course of his life in the present world only, without reference to any other state of being. And they have interpreted the *form of God*, in which the apostle says he was, not as any thing belonging to him in a former state, but as what "was enjoyed by him in this world, says Dr. Lardner; denoting his knowledge of the hearts of men, his power of healing diseases, and raising the dead, and working other miracles, at all times, whenever he pleased." From a power of this divine kind intrusted with him, he might be truly said to be godlike, in the form of God. *Μορφη*, (*f*) *forma*, &c. the form of God, says Grotius, as cited by Lardner, denotes only an external appearance, something that strikes our senses; such for instance as Christ's eminent power of healing all diseases, casting out demons, raising
the

(*f*) *Μορφη*, *forma*, in nostris libris non significat internum et occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos incurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, ejiciendi dæmonas, excitandi mortuos, mutandi rerum naturas: quæ vere divina sunt, ita ut Moses, qui tam magna non fecit, dictus ob id fuerit deus Pharaoni. Grot. in Philip. ii. 6.

the dead, changing the nature of things; which may be called somewhat truly divine: so that Moses, though far from doing any thing of the kind equal to what Christ did, was nevertheless called (Exod vii. 1.) a god unto Pharaoh."

This interpretation will be more confirmed, and perhaps some new light let in upon this celebrated passage, by considering its connection with the subject the apostle is treating upon.

A little before, at the 27th verse of the first chapter, he begins an exhortation to his Philippian converts to peace and unity; and resuming it in the beginning of this second chapter, he says; *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, i. e. belonging to us as christians; if any comfort of love, i. e. if any comfort to be derived from that mutual love which is peculiarly bound upon us; if any fellowship, rather any joint participation of the spirit, i. e. of the gifts of the spirit, then ordinarily dispensed to believers; if any bowels and mercies, i. e. any natural kindness and forbearance towards each other; fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

To

To what end now this repeated call in such variety of expression, to think humbly of their own powers and talents, and highly of those of others, but with reference to those gifts of the spirit, which he actually mentions here, and of which he speaks in another place, (1 Cor. xii.) as being sometimes the cause of much confusion, strife and vain-glory in their public assemblies for worship, and against which he would guard his beloved Philippians; that in the exercise of their different gifts, of speaking in unknown tongues; of prophecy, *i.e.* teaching by a divine extraordinary assistance; of healing diseases by a word's speaking, &c. they should not let any pride or vanity take place, but the edification of others, for which only such gifts were bestowed, to be their only object.

After pointing out to them a proper lowly temper and conduct with respect to these spiritual gifts bestowed upon them; our apostle is naturally led to recommend to them the behaviour of their great lord and master, under his most extraordinary gifts and endowments; and which I hope the reader will plainly see to be his purpose in what he goes on to say, which is less perceivable in our english version by omitting the connecting particle, **FOR.**

Philip.

Philip. ii. 5. 6. 7. 8.

Instead of

read

Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. *For the same mind ought to be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Paraphrase.—For ye ought to be of that humble condescending disposition in the use of these extraordinary divine communications, which shewed itself in Jesus, the great anointed prophet of God, and our lord and master.

Instead of

read

Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. *Who being in the form of God (t), held not the being like unto God a spoil, or prize.*

Paraphrase.—Who being invested with the most extraordinary divine powers, did not shew any eagerness, or betray any selfish complacency in them.

Instead

(t) *ὡς ἀπαράμυτος ἠνέκατο*] held not the being like unto God in the light of a prize: i. e. did not look upon it with those affections, which usually arise in the minds of men, when they obtain great unexpected spoil. J. J.

Philippians ii. —

Instead of

read.

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man.

But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being in the (u) likeness of common mortals.

Paraphrase.—But on the contrary, during the whole course of his ministry, acted as a person who was intirely destitute of such flattering distinctions; inasmuch as he condescended, with the utmost self-abasement to the spiritual necessities of others, as a slave attending on his God.

Instead of

read

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became

And appearing only as an ordinary mortal, (x) he humbled himself, obedient

(u) This is an explanation of his not being greedy to retain a likeness to God; *i. e.* he did not esteem those ensigns of deity and dignity a desirable thing, but gave them up. J. J.

(x) How very expressly and particularly does St. Paul here teach us, that our Lord was one of our own species, subject

obedient unto death, even and became obedient unto the death of the cross. death, even the death of the cross.

Paraphrase.—And thus being in the condition of a common man, he willingly gave way to the lowest degradation of himself, in submitting by the will of God and for our good, to the painful and ignominious death of the cross.

Philippians ii. —

Instead of read

Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name. Wherefore God hath highly exalted (y) him, and of his great favour hath bestowed upon him a name, which is above every name.

Paraphrase.—Wherefore God hath raised him to eminent dignity, and of his goodness bestowed upon him the most honourable distinction.

Instead
subject to all the innocent infirmities of our nature, with superior endowments from God, and at last highly rewarded by him for his virtues, and for nobly dying in the cause of truth!

(y) The exaltation of Christ is the prevalence of his religion by a divine power. J. J.

Philippians ii. —

Instead of

read

<i>That at the name of</i>	<i>That to the name (x)</i>
<i>Jesus every knee should</i>	<i>of Jesus every knee should</i>
<i>bow, of things in heaven</i>	<i>bow, of things in heaven,</i>
<i>and things on earth, and</i>	<i>and things on earth, and</i>
<i>things under the earth;</i>	<i>things under the earth;</i>
<i>and that every tongue</i>	<i>and that every tongue</i>
<i>should confess that Jesus</i>	<i>should confess that Jesus</i>
<i>Christ is Lord, to the</i>	<i>Christ is Lord, to the</i>
<i>glory of God, the Father.</i>	<i>glory of God, the Father.</i>

Paraphrase.—That the whole world shall be brought to submit to the authority of Christ, and to believe the gospel, with thankful acknowledgement of those gracious terms of a future eternal happiness, which Jesus delivered from the supreme Father of all: to whom ultimately all praise and honour are due.

Thus hath it been fully evinced, that St. Paul here, in speaking of Christ Jesus *being in the form*

T 2

of

(x) — that *to his name*; i. e. in acknowledgement of his religion, every human creature should bend. For things above the earth, below the earth, &c. mean only that all human creatures should acknowledge his religion; i. e. glorify the Father. J. J.

of God, and taking upon him *the form of a servant*, had nothing in his mind relating to any prior existence of our Saviour, but only intended to express the very extraordinary, godlike gifts of a divine wisdom and power conferred upon him, and his humble demeanour under them. This idea was briefly intimated to the public a few years since (a), and mentioned as having been received from a learned friend. *See G. Clark on the Unity of God, on the place.*

That friend was the late Dr. John Jebb: one of those great and rare characters, whose whole energy of mind, and his was one of the largest and most benevolent, was continually on the stretch to promote piety, virtue and the public good; with an unwearied attention, at the same time, to serve his private friends and acquaintance, by every kind office.

It pleased the divine providence to remove him from us, before he had found leisure to give a proper form to his admirable (b) lectures, and intended

(a) Two Dissertations, with a Postscript, p. 46. 47. Printed for Johnson, 1779.

(b) At the end of the manuscript, which contains the plan of these lectures, were those "Theological propositions, and miscellaneous observations, with general maxims of reason and

intended illustration of the sacred oracles, especially of the New Testament: for which scarcely any man in any age since the apostles, was better fitted. And it was an object, which he never (c) lost sight of, in his application to, and in the midst of the labours of his new toilsome profession, after that out of a principle of conscience, and that he might not any longer worship any other Being but the one true God and parent of the universe, he had resigned his preferments and prospects in the established church.

In some loose papers among his manuscript notes, on the New Testament, all which he kindly bequeathed to me a few days only before the present scene closed; I found a few strictures on this passage of St. Paul to the Philippians, from which I have added one or two above, marked with

T 3

his
and religion," which are printed in vol. ii. p. 137. of Dr. Jebb's works; and which is a circumstance concerning them, not improper to be suggested, as it may serve to account for their being so collected together. With these I furnished my worthy colleague, Dr. Disney, to whom the public owe many obligations for his care and labour in arranging and publishing this excellent person's imperfect but valuable remains, and for the memorials he has given us of him.

(c) This frequently appears in his manuscript papers which he left behind him.

his usual signature and the initials of his name, J. J. And among them was the following memorandum.

' Mr. Tyrwhitt (*d*) was the first who convinced me, that there is in this place a reference to *spiritual gifts*, which the Philippian christians made their boast of, and which the apostle recommends to them to apply to their proper end of edification, with due humility and concension as Jesus did, who possessed them in the most eminent degree.'

I am the rather glad to mention this anecdote, not only for the deserved honour it does to one person, who will be the least pleased with what relates to himself in it: but the more, as it serves to shew the singular virtue of the friend, whose loss we must ever deplore: who, whilst he took pleasure in doing credit to others, by acknowledging any light he received from them, was so humble and communicative with respect to his own curious knowlege and discoveries, particularly in what related to the holy scriptures; content to have others enlightened and the truth disseminated, himself shunning the fame and the appearance of it. A temper of mind this, which was in all other respects conspicuous in him, to those who knew

(*d*) With this gentleman, and with Mr. Lambert, fellow of Trinity college, Dr. Jebb lived on terms of intimate friendship, beyond any others.

knew him intimately; and which will particularly fit him for that future world, revealed to the christian, where happiness will be in proportion to men's benevolent dispositions and preference of others to themselves.

Hebrews i. 1. 2.

Instead of

read

<i>God—bath in these</i>	<i>God—bath in these</i>
<i>last days, spoken unto us</i>	<i>last days spoken unto us</i>
<i>by his Son, whom he bath</i>	<i>by his Son, whom he bath</i>
<i>appointed heir of all</i>	<i>appointed Lord of all</i>
<i>things, by whom also he</i>	<i>things; for whom also</i>
<i>made the worlds.</i>	<i>he constituted the ages.</i>

Heir of all things is the same as lord, and the latter word is only adopted as more agreeable to the general language of the apostles concerning their divine master, Acts ii. 14. 36. Peter, with all the other apostles, tell their countrymen, *God bath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Phil. ii. 9—11. *God bath exalted him—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus, the Christ, is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.* The same thing is expressed Eph. i. 22. *God bath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.* It is also only what our Saviour himself declares

after his resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*; which is explained by what follows to be only a power to propagate the gospel with effect throughout the world.

By *all things* here, of which he is said to be made lord, is to be understood, not all things in the universe, as some would make it, or all things upon this earth, but all such things as the (e) Son here mentioned, *i. e.* the Messiah, the great appointed prophet had to do with; which are only what related to the gospel and the eternal salvation of mankind.

— *For whom also he constituted the ages*; not (f) *by whom also he made the worlds*. For the sacred writer could not speak here of the creation of the natural system, because he all along afterwards describes the holy Jesus, as merely a human being, extraordinarily distinguished by almighty God. Moreover, after having said, that the Son was made

(e) All who take their ideas and knowledge from the scriptures, do and will find, that *the Son, Son of God*, is only another way of speaking to express the Christ, the Messiah.

(f) Dr. Doddridge prefers the rendering of the passage, *constituted the ages*: and yet he also inserts in his paraphrase, *created the worlds*.

made lord of all things, it is not likely that he should add, that he created them. Also, if the sacred writer wished to teach that Christ was in any fashion the creator of the world, there was other customary language in which he would have been likely to express it; and which would have had no ambiguity in it. So that if any creation is here intended, it must be the new creation, the reformation of all things by the gospel.

But the term, *αιωνας*, which we translate worlds, signifies also *ages* (*g*), certain periods in which there were different dispensations of divine providence to mankind, which made way for the gospel. And the preposition *δια*, (*b*) being used to signify

(*g*) 'Whether by *αιωνες*, *ages*, the several dispensations mankind were under from first to last, — be here meant; this seems visibly the sense of the place, that all these dispensations, in the several ages of the church, were all, by the pre-ordination of God's purpose, regulated and constituted in Christ Jesus our Lord; that is, with regard to Christ, who was appointed lord and head over all.' Locke on Ephesians, iii. 11.

(*b*) Thucydides. Ed. Oxon, 1696. Lib. vi. p. 382. — *δι' ους παρ' αινειον*. 'They were determined first to take revenge on him, *δι' ους* on whose account, they exposed themselves to all hazards.' This may illustrate, Heb. i. 2. by shewing, that *δια* with a genitive is expressive of a final cause, or the object in view.

The

signify, not only the instrument, but the object in view. The clause before us may very properly be rendered, *for, or on account of whom*, he constituted the ages.

Hebrews i. 5.

Instead of read

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I bestowed a new being upon thee.*

The apostle Paul, in Acts xiii. 33. teaches us to understand these words as expressive of our Lord's being raised to life; and therefore in that place and here, the harsh idiom of the hebrew language, *begotten,*

The above came from Mr. Belfham, in a letter to Dr. Priestley, and was communicated to me some time ago.

This gentleman has since been added to the other worthy and respectable tutors of New College, Hackney, near London, as resident tutor, at their particular desire; and, for superior judgment, knowledge, and the happy art of communicating it to others, together with an admirable talent of gaining youth to the love of science and virtue, he is an acquisition of which that promising noble Seminary may well make it's boast.

begotten, ought to be rejected, and a proper english word be used of an equivalent sense.

The term *begotten* also here and in the following instance, is rejected, as it serves to countenance the unscriptural unintelligible doctrine of Christ's prior or eternal generation before he was born of his mother Mary.

Hebrews i. 6.

Instead of

read

<i>And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.</i>	<i>And again, when he bringeth the well-beloved into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God do homage to him.</i>
--	--

The justness and propriety of these two alterations in this verse, hath been accounted for before.

John iii. 16. 18.

Instead of

read

<i>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in</i>	<i>For God so loved the world, that he gave his most beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him</i>
---	--

*him should not perish, but should not perish, but have
have everlasting life. everlasting life.*

*He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not,
is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-
begotten Son of God. He that believeth on him is not condemned:
but he that believeth not, is condemned already, be-
cause he hath not believed in the name of the most
beloved Son of God.*

Hebrews i. 8.

Instead of

read

*Unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for
ever and ever. Unto the Son he saith,
God is thy throne for
ever and ever.*

i. e. the establisher of thy throne: thy support.
All must agree that the words in the original
equally admit this translation. And those who are
for having Christ here to be called God, a title
never once used concerning him, do not sufficiently
consider, that even upon that supposition, he is at
the same time, in the next verse, declared to have
a God over him, who made him whatever he
was.

Hebrews

Hebrews ii. 14.

Instead of

read

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same.

i. e. Christ was a man, altogether mortal, like the rest of mankind. Hardy's note is very proper. ' *Ipse similiter particeps factus est eorundem*; i. e. *mortalis homo, et miseriis obnoxius.*

Hebrews ii. 16.

Instead of

read

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

For verily he did not deliver angels, but he delivered the seed of Abraham.

The proper meaning of the word in the original, *ἐπιλαμβάνεται*, is, to lay hold of any one to help them. So that the taking our nature upon him, as if Christ had been possessed of another nature before, is a thing quite beside the apostle's meaning. Beausobre, whom I have followed, thus renders the words. ' *Car il n' est pas le libérateur des anges, mais de la postérité d'Abraham.*'

1 John i. 1. 2. 3.

Instead of

read

<i>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.</i>	<i>We publish unto you, concerning the word of life, him, who was from the beginning, whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon, and our hands have handled; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.) Him whom we have seen and heard, we do publish unto you.</i>
---	--

It is with diffidence that I propose this new translation of the entrance of this epistle, though I am myself persuaded of it's being a just representation of the meaning of St. John, for the reasons given above, in the explanation of the preface to his gospel: But let others judge of it.

It

It may be proper however, here to mention, that the apostle is here opposing some early christians, who out of mistaken regards for Christ, and the prejudices of their philosophy, would not allow him to have been a real suffering mortal, like others. And that this was the first corruption of the true doctrine concerning Christ, cannot be denied on any grounds of truth.

— *from the beginning*] is not, from the beginning of time; but, as our apostle himself is found to explain it, from the beginning of our Saviour's ministry, at which time, he might properly be called the Christ, that is, the anointed prophet, on account of the descent of the holy spirit upon him, to qualify him for his great office, in the abundant gifts of a divine wisdom and power then first conferred upon him. And a circumstance of this kind was very justly urged against these men, who, in a strange way, made Christ (i) a separate preexistent spirit, united to the man Jesus.

CONCLUSION.

(i) These men did not attend to those words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 5. *There is one God and one mediator or minister, between God and man, the man Jesus Christ*: for there Christ Jesus is called expressly, one single person of the human race. But St. Paul here likewise directly declares, in words which no one can mistake or pervert, that Christ Jesus was as surely a mortal man *ανθρωπος*, one of the human race, as all the rest of us are mortal men, *ανθρωποι*, and that he had no other origin, was in no other class of beings, was no more preexistent, than we are.

+ And why may not "the Beginning" in the 1. Chap. of John's Gospel be so understood?

ψ Had the apostle been a Trinitarian - he would have said the God-man Jesus Xp. or Jehovah-Jesus &c. properly; for none ~~then~~ ^{there} would he was a man.

CONCLUSION.

It has now been manifested, in many instances, to what a degree our present english translation of the scriptures, misrepresents them, and misleads those thousands and ten thousands, who are forced to rely upon it; especially by contributing to introduce among christians, two other persons as Gods, and to be worshiped, Jesus, and the holy Ghost, putting them upon an equality with the supreme Father of all; with HIM, whom the blessed Jesus stiled his God and Father, and the only true God; whom he always worshiped himself, and directed all others to worship him only.

Those christians, who with Moses and the prophets of old, and their descendants, the present

And the apostle, by this declaration, here, as indeed every where else, but here particularly, defines and publishes Christ to have been a mortal man, and God in no sense whatsoever, by describing him as a distinct person and agent, acting betwixt God and man. The antient unitarians pointed to this text, among many others equally strong, to their adversaries.

present jews, believe the Divine Unity in the most exclusive absolute sense; and who have maintained and taught, and maintain and teach, that Jehovah, the Father, is God alone, and to be worshiped, and no other person, neither Jesus Christ nor the holy Ghost; they have been almost universally calumniated, may I not say? and sometimes by learned and good men, as forcing an unnatural sense upon the sacred writings, as tampering with them at other times, and altering them, to make them speak as they would have them.

But from what has been laid before you in the several chapters of this work, and the methods of interpretation of the sacred volume pursued in it, you will perceive, I trust, how much these christians have been misrepresented. For, in general, the Unitarians, (or Socinians, as they are sometimes called, though differing much from Socinus, especially in his worship of Christ) they not only profess to follow, but actually do follow the scriptures only, and form their sentiments of God, and Christ, and of the divine revealed will, from them only. These they study

by night and by day, with a single view to find out what they teach. And if in any thing they mistake, or misapprehend their meaning, they trust that they are ready, and will rejoice to correct their errors.

They are, however, absolutely persuaded, upon the firmest grounds, such as have been laid down in this work, *viz.* the testimony of Moses, of Solomon; and the ancient prophets; the testimony of Jesus, and of all his apostles;

1. That there is but one God, one Person, who is God; *namely*, Jehovah, the Father alone.

2. That the holy Jesus was a man of the Jewish nation, raised up and commissioned by the almighty Father to teach his will, and to bring all mankind to virtue and eternal happiness.

And although there be those who are unwilling to admit the light of these great truths; yet the clouds of prejudice are daily vanishing, and the evidence of them is continually coming forth so bright and irresistible, that there can be no doubt of the time approximating, when the sore stain and disgrace of *polytheism* will be wiped away from the

the christian name, and the first of all the divine commandments, promulged by Moses, and adopted and confirmed by Jesus Christ, (which in the very terms excludes every person from being God but one) will be universally acknowledged and obeyed by christians, viz. Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 29—
JEHOVAH is our God, JEHOVAH alone. Exod. xx.
 2. 3. *I am JEHOVAH thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

JEHOVAH reigns, let every nation hear,
 And at his footstool bow with holy fear;
 Let heaven's high arches eccho with his name,
 And the wide peopled earth his praise proclaim--
 . . .
 But oh! our highest notes the theme debase,
 And silence is our least injurious praise:
 Cease, cease your songs, the daring flight controul,
 Revere him in the stilness of the soul:
 With silent duty meekly bend before him,
 And deep within your inmost hearts adore him.

MRS. BARBAULD.

F I N I S.

N. B. The reader is desired to blot out the paragraph at the end of the Preface to my former Address, as I was misinformed in what is there mentioned relating to the Bishop of Exeter; and Bishops Yorke and Porteus were the only present english Bishops, who, when in inferior stations, were desirous to engage their spiritual superiors, to a revival of the articles, liturgy, and forms of subscription of the church.

ERRATA.

- Page v. l. 12. dele *Hij*.
 x. l. 1503, from bottom, for *premier* read *premier*.
 xvi. at the bottom of the page, and end of the note, insert; *Let us not be Hottentots in our religion!*
 xxv. l. 4, after *subject*, put a semicolon;
 49. for life of *Christ*, read life of *Socinus*.
 80. for *navru*, read *avru*.
 122. last line, read *as will be seen shortly*.
 155. l. 8, from bottom, for *fellow-creature*, read *fellow-workman*.
 185. l. 1. 5, from bottom, read, *adopted after him*.
 204. l. 1, read, *Of the perversion of the striking, &c.*
 216. l. 6, dele for it.
 note (*) refers to p. 215.
 289. for *God*, read *lord*.
 304. l. 1. last but one, for *pointed to*, read *pointed out*.
 N. B. There is a repetition of some few of the sections of the first chapter, by mistake; but the sense is not at all affected by it.

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Christ,

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